BIBLE PLAYS

BY

RITA BENTON

Norman E. Deltra

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

The Abingdon Religious Education Texts
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BIBLE PLAYS

BY

RITA BENTON

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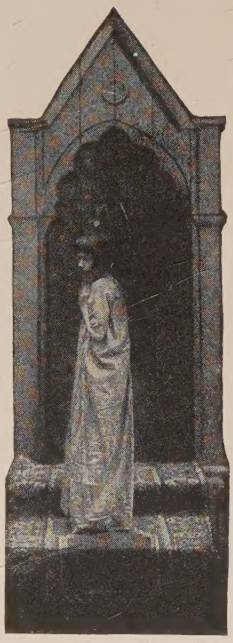
To the "Mary"

of my play,

and all the other children

who have played with me.

I saw a "Mary" in a gilded
shrine,
By that "blest" painter, Fra
Angelico,
A "Virgin" o'er the Christ-
Child bending low,
A Raphael "Madonna," pure
—divine.
In church, in street, in square,
in Florence old,
There, as each artist dreamed,
he wrought a face—
Sad, pure, devout, yet fash-
ioned all with grace—
The face, a fair Madonna,
framed in gold.
I too have dreamed. I saw a
little child
Play Mary's part in an old
Mystery,
Blue-robed, white-veiled, the
baby on her knee.
Nor all unworthy seemed my
"Mary mild,"
Framed in the dusk cathe-
dral's candle-glow,
The brush of Raphael or An-
gelo.



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Note—For the use of many of the photographs reproduced in this book we are indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Edward D. Waters.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the present volume, as in her *Shorter Bible Plays,* the author has achieved two desirable ends: She has reached a high level of dramatic interest and literary quality in her writing, and she has represented with fidelity and insight the biblical stories and characters with which she deals.

We speak in our later educational literature of the use of the dramatic impulse in the teaching of religion to young children. This is well; the concept is based on a psychology whose roots go deep in human nature. But at what age do we lose our interest in the dramatic? At what stage in our life history do we fail to respond to the representation in action of scenes and experiences once lived by those like ourselves? Indeed, when does the time come when we no longer feel a thrill through ourselves *taking part* in the reproduction of dramatic events long since recorded in history?

The simple fact is, of course, that the dramatic impulse is one phase of our original nature, one factor in our hereditary equipment, that remains relatively constant through life. Its nature may change, but the inner urge is always present.

On the practical side this means that the dramatic element should appear at all stages of the religious training of youth. Not in childhood alone, but throughout adolescence also, the motive is strong to see or participate in dramatic plays and pageants.

Miss Benton's *Bible Plays* is a volume adapted with rare skill to the needs of the newer religious education. The plays

are suited to amateurs, yet worthy of the highest skill. Characters of various ages from young children to adults are brought in. The story of the play can be followed and the action understood by children, yet the interest will not fail for the mature and scholarly. The thorough testing the author has given the plays in actual use under her own direction makes sure their success in presentation.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

THE PEOPLE

Jacob.		The Wife of Potiphar.
		Her Slave Girls.
Reuben,		Keeper of the Prison.
Simeon,		Three Small Boys.
Levi,		Baker to Pharaoh.
Judah,		Butler to Pharaoh.
Issachar,		Asenath, the High
Zebulun,		Priest's Daughter.
Dan,	*Sons of Jacob.*	Her Slave Girls.
Naphtali,		Pharaoh.
Gad,		Page to Pharaoh.
Asher,		Four Guards.
Joseph,		Three Slaves.
Benjamin,		Three Messengers.
		Ishmaelites.
		A Crier.

The Ishmaelites in Act I may become soldiers, slaves, or messengers in the latter part of the play.

The part of Joseph may be taken by a younger lad in Act I and II, and by an older lad during the remainder of the play. If desired, the parts of Reuben, Simeon, Judah, may be divided among other brethren..

THE PLACE

Act I. The Vale of Shechem.
Act II. A Street or Market Square in Egypt.
Act III. The Gardens of Pharaoh.
Act IV. The Public Square.
Act V. The Gardens of Joseph.

JOSEPH: "I HAVE DREAMED A DREAM"

As this play was written for out-of-door presentation, the scenes are all arranged to take place in the open.

For the first act have various stacks of corn about the stage, and stick corn in the ground so as to form a curtain between stage and audience. The brothers gather the curtain of corn and at the end of Act I carry the remainder off stage.

Two heads of sphinxes may be modeled out of clay, in relief, and hidden behind the corn, so as to mark the shift of scene to Egypt.

For indoor presentation, the same simplicity may be observed; or the Egyptian scenes may be rendered with more care.

THE PROPERTIES

Coat of many colors for Joseph.
Litter for Wife of Potiphar (and Jacob).
Gold pieces for Wife of Potiphar.
Basin of blood for Zebulun.
Three stakes, chains, and a mallet for Keeper of gaol.
A rose or lotus for Asenath.
Fans for Slaves.
Ball.
Goblet and pitcher for Butler.
Ring for Pharaoh.
Sacks of grain.
Gold.
Table on trestles.
Benches or stools.
Baskets of fruit.
Goblets of wine.

COSTUME SUGGESTIONS

Let the Egyptians be in brilliant colors; the Jews in black and white.

(For more detailed suggestions as to costumes to be used in these plays, see page 7 of *Shorter Bible Plays.*)

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

ACT I. *The Vale of Shechem*

The scene is a corn field, through which JOSEPH *is seen, coming from a distance. The pit need not be represented on the stage.*

JOSEPH (*calls*): Hola! Reuben! Dan! (*He enters, calling as loudly as he can.*) Reuben! Judah! Hola! (*He looks this way and that way, then pushes his head between the curtain of corn.*)

Ai, but the sun is hot, and my brethren far afield! (*He throws himself back against a stack of corn which falls; he chuckles.*)

Ai, they will be angered, but what care I, so my father chide me not. (*He takes a stalk of corn and prances to and fro, trampling down the curtain of corn.*)

This is my scepter: I am a chief and my brethren are prostrate before me. I am a king and my brethren are slaves at my feet. (*He throws himself below the largest stack of corn and claps his hands.*)

I will rest me until my slaves appear. (*He sleeps.*)

(*The* BRETHREN *enter from distance. Each carries corn in his arms.*)

JUDAH (*in advance, calls*): Hasten, brothers, for our labor is well-nigh over. (*He pauses abruptly.*) Who hath trampled the corn?

SIMEON (*hastening up*): An enemy hath done this!

REUBEN (*bending over* JOSEPH): Stt! Men! It is Joseph; he sleepeth.

SIMEON (*looking from ruined corn to* JOSEPH): The impish lad!

JUDAH: So secure doth he feel in his father's love!

SIMEON: He sleeps while we labor; like a king doth he take his ease. Would we were quit of him! (*He starts to kick* JOSEPH, *but* REUBEN *interferes.*)

(*As they speak, they gather up all the loose corn which has served as a curtain, till each holds a goodly bundle.*)

JUDAH: Brothers, if we be not wary, our father will leave this lad all of his possessions, and we be left but as slaves to serve him.

SIMEON: Never! Sooner would I slay him as Cain slew Abel, than bend and serve him!

DAN: Ho! What do ye even now but gather in the harvest that *he* may fatten?

SIMEON: Brethren, are we agreed?

JUDAH: What is your meaning?

SIMEON: Peace! There cometh Benjamin with tidings from our father.

(BENJAMIN *runs in, panting.*)

BENJAMIN: Brothers, O brothers, where is Joseph? Our father bade me say he must not labor; the sun is hot.

SIMEON (*bitterly, pointing to* JOSEPH): *Doth* he labor?

ZEBULUN: Our father would not have his darling toil.

BENJAMIN (*leans over* JOSEPH *and tickles him with a straw*): Hi, Joseph, wake!

(JOSEPH *stretches and yawns. His brothers surround him; they bow low.*)

SIMEON: Take thine ease, lord, while we labor!

JUDAH: Escape the heat of the day, O beloved of thy father!

ZEBULUN: We are thy slaves, O much-favored!

JOSEPH (*half awake*): Do ye bow before me? Am I indeed your lord? (*Ironic laughter from the brothers.*)

REUBEN (*seizing him*): Break me a cane of the willow, Benjamin; this lad needs teaching to respect his elders.

JOSEPH (*struggling*): Thou shalt not beat me, thou shalt not, shalt not!

BENJAMIN (*squaring his shoulders by* JOSEPH'S *side*): Shalt not!

JOSEPH (*wresting himself free*): Lo, I have dreamed a dream lying there in the shade. (REUBEN *tries to seize him.*) Nay, hear me, Reuben! For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves came round about and made obeisance to my sheaf.

Lo, look ye now!

(*As he has described, his brothers are bending before him, each carrying an armful of corn. At* JOSEPH'S *last words every brother stiffens instantly, and* SIMEON *kicks over the sheaf or stack under which* JOSEPH *was lying.*)

SIMEON (*jeering*): Behold the upright sheaf!

JUDAH: You dreamed indeed! We bowed in mockery.

JOSEPH (*saucily*): Ye shall bow in earnest some day.

JUDAH: Never!

SIMEON: My hands do itch to choke thee. Beat him, Reuben.

JOSEPH: No, no! Father! Father!

(JACOB *is seen approaching in the distance.* JOSEPH struggles *to escape* REUBEN'S hold.)

JACOB (*entering*): Reuben, what means this? Wherefore do ye entreat your brother thus? Unhand him instantly.

(REUBEN *reluctantly lets go.*)

JOSEPH (*rubbing his arm*): Father, they threat me.

SIMEON (*under his breath*): Teller of tales!

JACOB: My sons, hearken to me: You shall not maltreat the lad, lest I lose my love. He is well-nigh the least among you; will ye give over your rough play?

JUDAH: Thou ever hast loved the children of Rachel—(*indicates* JOSEPH *and* BENJAMIN)—more than us.

REUBEN: Listen, my father, shall Joseph have dominion over us and over our children?

JACOB: What is this?

SIMEON: Hearken, father: He dreamed that we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, his sheaf arose and stood upright and our sheaves bowed before him.

JACOB: Were it so, it would not injure your stiff-neckedness. If ye bow down to him, he bows to me—

JOSEPH (*eagerly*): Nay, father, not so, for I have dreamed yet another dream: Behold the sun and moon and eleven stars, all, all made obeisance to me.

JACOB: What! Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come and bow ourselves to thee? (JOSEPH *nods.*)
Thou art proud, boy, and I am much displeased with thee.

Benjamin, let me lean on thee—but no, no, I cannot be angry with thee, child of Rachel; come to my other arm.

JOSEPH: I will rest me here. (*Flings himself on ground.*) Reuben may not beat me, may he, father?

JACOB: No one shall touch thee. Come, Benjamin. (*He goes out leaning on* BENJAMIN.)

(*The other* BRETHREN *eye* JOSEPH, *then draw slowly near him. He regards them pertly, then with growing fear edges away and breaks into a run.*)

JOSEPH (*cries*): Father! Father!

SIMEON (*seizes him*): Not so fast! We have yet to deal with thee.

JOSEPH: Thou darest not touch me.

JUDAH: Dreamer, awake! Thy father is not here to protect thee.

SIMEON (*shaking him*): Thou hast borne lying tales many times; now I pluck thy tongue—

ZEBULUN: Better to slay him!

JOSEPH: Father! My father! (*He kicks wildly.*)

SIMEON: Cast him into the pit, and we will say an evil beast hath devoured him. (*They drag at him.*)

ZEBULUN: Pluck off his coat, his coat of many colors. (*They do so.*)

JOSEPH (*struggling, frees himself and darts to* REUBEN): Reuben, Reuben, thou wilt not let them hurt me—

REUBEN (*in a low voice or with reassuring gesture*): Fear not. (*To others.*) I will seek our father and say, Joseph is run off into the wilderness. (*He goes.*)

(*Several of the brothers drag* JOSEPH *away to the pit.*)

ZEBULUN: Now Reuben is gone, shall we not slay him?

JUDAH: Yonder, see! A traveling company approaching! What profit is it if we slay our brother? Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he *is* our brother.

SIMEON (*nods*): Aye, aye! So be it!

(*The* ISHMAELITES *enter. They carry a litter on which rests a wife for* POTIPHAR *of Egypt.*)

JUDAH: Halt! Be ye Ishmaelites?

ISHMAELITE: Aye, come from Gilead! We bear spicery and balm and myrrh to Egypt, sent for by Pharaoh. Also a wife for the Lord Potiphar!

(ZEBULUN *goes out and soon reappears with other* BRETHREN, *leading* JOSEPH.)

SIMEON: Would ye buy a slave?

ISHMAELITE: Nay, I traffic not in such merchandise.

POTIPHAR'S WIFE (*leaning out of litter*): Come hither, lad! (*They drag* JOSEPH *to her.*) I will buy the slave. What is your price?

SIMEON: Fifty silver pieces!

POTIPHAR'S WIFE (*calmly*): I will give you twenty. (*She counts them out into his hand.*)

JOSEPH (*flinging himself against* JUDAH): Judah, Judah, send me not into a strange country! Brethren, let me go home! I will serve you; I will be obedient. Let me go ho-o-me—

ZEBULUN: No blubbering! (*Strikes him.*)

SIMEON: Interpreter of dreams, where are you now?

JOSEPH (*drawing himself together*): I have dreamed what I

THE WIFE OF POTIPHAR

have dreamed, and the day will come when ye and your little ones shall lick the dust of the earth, and my foot shall be upon you.

ISHMAELITE: Peace, slave!

POTIPHAR'S WIFE: Come, lad, to me. I will treat thee gently if thou prove faithful.

ISHMAELITE: Forward, men, to the southward, unto Egypt!

(*His men surround* JOSEPH, *and all pass out.*)

ZEBULUN: Divide the spoil!

JUDAH: Two bits to each of ye, but Reuben's share to me, for 'twas my thought.

SIMEON: There he comes, yonder!

(REUBEN *enters hastily.*)

REUBEN: Our father searcheth in every direction; he is crazed with grief. We must discover the boy and give him to his father. (*He goes out in direction of pit.*)

SIMEON: Bring the blood of a kid. We must dip his coat, his coat of many colors. (ZEBULUN *goes out.*)

(REUBEN *reappears with horror on his face.*)

REUBEN: Alas, the child is not there! Where have ye hid him?

JUDAH: The child is far from hence, nor canst thou rescue him.

(ZEBULUN *enters with basin of blood.*)

SIMEON (*dipping coat*): We will say an evil beast hath devoured him. (*He hands* REUBEN *two pieces of silver.*) These two pieces of silver shall oil thy tongue.

REUBEN (*flinging silver to ground*): Ye have slain him!

SIMEON: So stupid art thou?

Would we waste the blood of a kid had we our brother's blood? Bah, he is sold into Egypt.

REUBEN: Little Joseph! Ah, ye have done wrong in the sight of the Lord—

ZEBULUN: Shh! Here cometh Jacob.

(JACOB *and* BENJAMIN *enter.*)

JACOB: My Joseph, what have ye done to my little Joseph? Make haste and search—

BENJAMIN (*calls*): Joseph! Joseph!

JACOB: Why are ye silent? Speak, what do ye hide?

SIMEON (*produces dripping coat*): This! We know not whether it be thy son's coat or no.

JACOB (*seizing it*): It is, it is my son's coat, but there is blood, fresh blood upon it.

ZEBULUN: We found it in the wilderness.

SIMEON: An evil beast hath devoured him; without doubt he is torn in pieces.

JACOB (*slowly and searchingly*): An evil beast? Yea, doubtless! Ah Joseph, Joseph, child of my loved Rachel, I will go down to the grave for thee, mourning.

Get ye gone, ye who have never loved him. Leave me with the last child of my loved Rachel. (*All go save* BENJAMIN, *taking the corn with them.*)

Benjamin, never leave me. Keep close to me lest evil beasts devour also thee, for my son is dead, my son Joseph is dead.

BENJAMIN: Aye, father! (*A thought suddenly strikes him.*) But, father, Joseph's dreams have never failed, and he did

dream that the sun and moon and stars bowed low before him.

(*Pulls* JACOB'S *robe.*) Father, didst hear?

JACOB: Bid me not hope, for Joseph is dead, is dead. (*They pass out.*)

ACT II. *A Street in Egypt*

(*The* KEEPER *of the Prison enters, bearing stakes, chains, and mallet. He drives a stake into ground, surveys it, then drives another. A small boy handsprings in.*)

BOY: Wherefore the stake and chain, O son of evil?

KEEPER: Speak civilly and I will mayhap answer. (*Attaches chains.*)

BOY (*bowing elaborately*): O favored of the gods and of the River Nile, our mother, speak: explain the mystery of the stake and chain.

KEEPER: O child of curiosity, Pharaoh—may Ra preserve him!—hath commanded that his butler and his baker be chained here in the public square as warning, that all his servants may fear and fall before him.

BOY: What was their sin?

KEEPER: Ask the River Nile! (*Shrugs.*)

(*Two other boys run in.*)

SECOND BOY: Behold—in the center of the market square!

THIRD BOY: Wherefore the stake and chain, O fat one?

KEEPER: Humph, I am busy.

SECOND BOY: Share with us thy wisdom.

FIRST BOY: They are for the butler and baker of the king.

ALL THE BOYS: The guards! Huzzah! Huzzah! Huzzah! Huzzah! (*They kick their heels in the manner of small boys.*)

(*Two* GUARDS *enter, dragging the* BAKER.)

FIRST GUARD: Make way, make way!

FIRST BOY: Whither away, O Baker to Majesty?

BAKER: Hearken, ye people, hear my cry! Lo, was this just? Pharaoh hath sent me to prison for flavoring his sugar-cakes with annis. His taste had changed and he desired cummin. Now was this just, I ask ye?

KEEPER (*chaining him to stake*): The more fool thou! Thou shouldest divine his taste.

BAKER (*sniveling*): How should I know that he desired cummin? Am I a prophet?

SECOND BOY: Ai, there comes another!

THIRD BOY: Pharaoh must have been given to drink of the River Nile; nothing else can account for the peevishness of his temper.

(GUARDS *enter with* BUTLER.)

FIRST BOY (*turning handspring*): Hi, Butler to Majesty—may Ra preserve him!—didst give him water to drink that he sent thee hither?

BUTLER (*indignantly*): I did but spill a little drop of wine as I served the High Priest's daughter, and she is a favorite of Pharaoh, so I am sent to a dungeon.

KEEPER (*attaching chain*): Cease thy chatter!

SLAVE GIRLS (*in distance*): Way, make way for the Lady Potiphar!

Enter POTIPHAR'S WIFE *followed by* SLAVE GIRLS *bearing fans. Behind her, two* GUARDS *lead* JOSEPH *in chains.*)

POTIPHAR'S WIFE (*imperiously*): Where is the gaoler? Hither, my man! Take ye charge of this, my slave; he insulted me during my lord's absence.

JOSEPH: Lady, thy tongue speaketh a lie.

POTIPHAR'S WIFE: He mocked me, said that I was old and painted.

JOSEPH (*impishly*): Aye, I said that, and so indeed thou art.

POTIPHAR'S WIFE: You hear?

Moreover those who sold him to me said he was an interpreter of dreams, but he is sullen and will interpret naught.

Chasten him, gaoler; here is silver for thee. (*She goes with her slave girls.*)

KEEPER (*drives in third stake and chains* JOSEPH): Canst thou interpret the dreams of man?

JOSEPH: Once I had the vision.

BUTLER: I have had a dream; interpret unto me.

In my dream, behold a vine was before me, and in the vine were three branches and blossoms shot forth and bare ripe grapes; and I took of the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

JOSEPH: Is that all?

BUTLER: That is all.

JOSEPH (*searches for inspiration, then gives way to despair*): A cloud is on me and I can see nothing.

BUTLER: Think! Think!

JOSEPH: I sit in bondage. Naught, naught have I been able to

interpret since I was sold a slave. (*Casts himself down on straw.*) O father! Father!

BAKER: Speak, fellow. (*Touches him with his foot.*)

JOSEPH: Let me be!

BAKER: Ho, ho! A sullen slave!

SLAVES OF ASENATH (*in distance*): Way for the High Priest's daughter! Way! Make way!

(ASENATH *enters followed by two* SLAVE GIRLS *bearing fans.*)

ASENATH: People, stand back! (*All but* JOSEPH *bow respectfully.*) Where is he that was butler to the king?

BUTLER (*bowing eagerly*): Here, lady!

ASENATH: Fellow, thy sentence was unjust, and so I have told Pharaoh. He shall incline his ear and be more gracious.

BUTLER: Do so, O beloved of heaven, and I will kiss the latchet of thy shoe. (*He kneels before her.*)

BAKER: Intercede for me also, daughter of the gods. I did but mix his sugar cakes with annis—

ASENATH: Is it true that thou didst seek to poison Pharaoh?

BAKER (*with great haste*): No, no, it is a lie. Who say so, lie!

ASENATH: Then thou need'st fear nothing. (*Points to* JOSEPH.) Who is this lad?

KEEPER: Slave to Lord Potiphar!

ASENATH: Why is he loaded with so heavy chains?

KEEPER: He hath mocked and insulted Potiphar's lady.

FIRST SLAVE GIRL: Ai, she doubtless deserved it.

SECOND SLAVE GIRL: Her tongue is the mother of lies.

First Slave Girl: Didst mock her painted face?

Second Slave Girl: Or her haughty air? Speak!

Joseph (*still face downward on the straw*): Let me be. I mocked her not; she lied.

Slave Girls: Ai! Tell us all about it. (*They crouch down beside him.*)

Asenath: Poor lad, how may I aid thee?

Joseph (*raises his head and sees her for the first time. He springs up*): Lady!

Asenath: Thou wast never born a slave!

Joseph (*holding himself proudly*): My father is Jacob, shepherd in the land of Canaan, but called by the name of Israel, Prince of God, and I was his favorite son. For this my brethren hated me and sold me into Egypt. God judge them!

Asenath: Thou poor lad! And dost thou long for home?

Joseph: I long for justice on my brethren.

Asenath: May the gods give thee wisdom!

Joseph: There are no gods; there is but one *God.*

Asenath: And *he* is a God of Vengeance?

Joseph: Yea!

Asenath: Now I see why thou dost sit in bondage, thy hate fetters thee.

I worship not thy god. My father, he is a priest and serves our gods of Egypt, but he hath taught me that to hate profits nothing, and casts a veil between our eyes and heaven.

Hate not, O child of Israel.

JOSEPH: But, lady, my brethren have treated me evilly in the sight of God; shall I not be revenged?

BAKER: Of a certainty! If the gods favor thee, make thy brethren lick the dust.

BUTLER: Aye, trample them, grind thou their faces in the dirt.

ASENATH (*disdainfully*): If thou hast a slave's nature, seek revenge, but if a prince's, free thyself from hatred.

JOSEPH: O lady, thy nature is queenlike.

ASENATH (*softly*): I would see thee free, O child of Israel.

JOSEPH: I would be free. I *will* free myself from hatred. (*To* BUTLER *and* BAKER.) Ye have saved me; ye have showed me how base a thing is lust for vengeance. (*To* ASENATH.) Thou hast shown me how divine a thing is compassion. I will be free in the spirit.

ASENATH (*gently*): *And* the body! I will intercede with Pharaoh. Fare thee well. (*She turns to go.*)

FIRST SLAVE: O lady, a rose is fallen from thy chaplet.

ASENATH: Let it lie.

(ASENATH *and her* SLAVES *go.* JOSEPH *gropes for the rose amid jeers.*)

KEEPER: Thou art in great good luck. On now to prison, for the night is coming! (*He unchains them.*)

BAKER (*contemptuously*): See the dreamer! He is in a trance.

BUTLER: Sh! He is praying. His lips move in prayer.

JOSEPH (*on his knees, lifting his arms to heaven*): Lord, Lord, again thou art with me, thou who wast hidden from me.

KEEPER: Arouse thee, fellow; this is no time for prayers. (*Touches* JOSEPH *with his toe.*)

JOSEPH (*rising*): The meaning of the dreams is come to me. The vision is mine again; the cloud is lifted. (*Turns to* BUTLER.) The three branches thou didst dream of are three days. Within three days Pharaoh shall restore thee to office, and thou shalt be his butler as aforetime.

BAKER: And my dream, master, interpret me my dream: Behold three baskets of bread were on my head, and in the uppermost basket, all manner of baked meats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat out of the basket.

JOSEPH (*thinks for a minute, then speaks*): Listen and tremble: The three baskets which thou dreamest of are three days. Within yet three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee. He shall hang thee on a tree, and the birds shall eat thy flesh.

(*The* BAKER *howls.*)

KEEPER: March on to prison. (*The* GUARDS *surround them and they all pass out.*)

ACT III. *The Gardens of Pharaoh*

(*Enter a* CRIER.)

CRIER: Ohé, ohé, hearken, ye men of Egypt! The king hath dreamed, Pharaoh hath dreamed a dream.

Who will interpret unto the king his dream? Riches and gold shall be his who shall interpret unto the king his dream. Ohé! Ohé! (*He passes out. His voice dies away in the distance.*)

(*Enter* ASENATH *and her* SLAVE GIRLS *playing ball. Introduce here as pretty a dance with the ball as possible.*)

ASENATH (*throwing ball*): Catch—if you can.

FIRST SLAVE (*leaping to meet ball*): Thou throwest like a lad.

ASENATH (*receiving ball*): I dreamed I was a lad, the other night, and lay in chains, and that a maid had bid me hope, had said that she would plead with Pharaoh for my freedom—and that the maid forgot. (*She buries her face in her hands.*)

SECOND SLAVE: Thou didst not forget. Thou hast pleaded before Pharaoh many times. (*Puts arm about her.*)

ASENATH: He is grown cold to me, me whom he hath ever called his "daughter!" He hearkeneth to the wife of Potiphar and she hateth the Hebrew lad. O maiden, my heart is heavy because of him.

FIRST SLAVE (*laughing*): Thy heart may be heavy, but thy feet are light.

ASENATH (*with righteous indignation*): I dance to conceal the heaviness of my thoughts.

SECOND SLAVE: Here cometh now the wife of Potiphar.

ASENATH: Play! Play! (*They play again.*)

(*Enter the* WIFE OF POTIPHAR *and her* SLAVE GIRLS.)

WIFE OF POTIPHAR (*slowly and insolently*): The daughter of the High Priest is merry.

ASENATH (*with a bewitching little courtesy*): Aye! Wilt join the pleasure making, lady?

WIFE OF POTIPHAR: I have no heart to play while Pharaoh is sad. (*Makes a sign to her slaves to fan her.*)

ASENATH: Alas! Can not the king's magicians and wise men interpret Pharaoh's dream?

WIFE OF POTIPHAR: Every interpreter hath failed.

ASENATH: Then—suffer thy slave boy to be brought before him. He was interpreter of dreams—

WIFE OF POTIPHAR: What know you of him? My slave lieth in prison and shall remain.

ASENATH (*resolutely*): Nay, lady, he shall be brought before Pharaoh.

WIFE OF POTIPHAR (*furiously*): That he shall not!

(*Enter* PHARAOH'S PAGE.)

PAGE: Fall down! Fall down on your knees and lick the dust! The Beloved of Heaven seeks his garden's peace.

ASENATH: No peace shall he find *here.*

(PHARAOH *enters followed by* BUTLER, GUARDS *and* SLAVES. *All present fall on their knees before him.*)

ALL: May Ra preserve thee, O Beloved of Heaven!

PHARAOH (*looking about uneasily*): I cannot sleep. I dream and dream and dream, and my dreams no one can interpret. Where is my butler? Lo, a glass of wine! (*The* BUTLER *pours a glass and presents it.*)

ASENATH: O lord king, I know of one, a Hebrew lad who is an interpreter of dreams—

PHARAOH: Where is he?

BUTLER: O lord, lord, hearken unto the least of thy servants: One day Pharaoh was wroth with his servants and had me put in ward, me and the chief baker, and we each dreamed a dream, I and he. And there was with us this young Hebrew lad, and he interpreted unto us our dreams. To

each man according to his dream did he interpret, and it came to pass. Me your High-mightiness restored to office; him you hanged.

PHARAOH: Send for the lad. (*Two* SOLDIERS *go.*)

WIFE OF POTIPHAR: Dream not of it, lord. He is my slave boy—

ASENATH: He is a prince of Israel!

WIFE OF POTIPHAR: A prince of liars!

ASENATH: Nay, I pledge my life upon his truth.

PHARAOH (*eyeing her with amusement*): Thou meanest it, Asenath? If he interpret unto me my dream, there is no gift he may not ask of me, even thy life, O Asenath. Shall I give it to him, O High Priest's daughter?

ASENATH (*shyly*): O King, my life is thine to do as pleaseth thee.

WIFE OF POTIPHAR: And if he fail, his life is forfeit.

ASENATH: No!

(JOSEPH *appears between* GUARDS.)

PHARAOH: Be it so! Is it he cometh yonder? Come hither. Art thou interpreter of dreams?

JOSEPH: It is not in me. God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

PHARAOH: Let him do so, but be it known to thee, thy life hangeth on the interpretation.

In my dream, behold I stood on the brink of a river; and behold there came up out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed and well-favored; and behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and ill-favored, and the lean and ill-favored kine did eat up the seven fat kine, and it could not

be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favored as at the beginning. So I awoke.

And again I dreamed and behold, seven ears came up upon one stalk, full and good; and behold seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprang up after them; and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears: and I told it to the magicians, but there was none that could declare it unto me.

JOSEPH (*remains a moment in prayer, then speaks*): The dream of Pharaoh is one: what God is about to do he hath declared unto Pharaoh. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven lean kine that came after them are seven years, and also the seven ears blasted by the east wind; what God is about to do he hath showed unto Pharaoh.

Behold there shall come seven years of great plenty throughout the land of Egypt; and there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and the famine shall consume the land; for it shall be very grievous. This God will shortly bring to pass.

ALL THE PEOPLE: Woe, woe, woe!

PHARAOH: Wherefore is this dream that I have dreamed? What evil have I done that the gods should send this dream upon me?

JOSEPH: Hearken, O Pharaoh: God hath sent unto thee this dream that thou mightest save the lives of nations. Let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt; and let him gather a fifth of all the corn during the seven years of plenty; under the hand of Pharaoh

JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAM

let him store it. It shall be for the seven years that follow, that the land perish not through the famine.

PHARAOH (*in amaze*): Thou art sent by the gods to teach us wisdom!

ASENATH: Hath he done well, O Pharaoh?

PHARAOH: He hath done well.

WIFE OF POTIPHAR (*laughs scornfully*): A clever knave! Who can say till twice seven years are past that he hath spoken lies? (*She sweeps haughtily out.*)

PHARAOH: I, Pharaoh!

Lo, can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the spirit of God is?

Remove his chains. (*Guards do so.*)

For as much as God hath showed thee all this, I set thee over all the land of Egypt. Take thou this ring, for I am Pharaoh, and according to thy word shall my people be ruled.

Now give thy orders.

JOSEPH (*to* FIRST GUARD): Go thou to the north, and bid the governor of each land build barns. Barns and granaries let them build, and into them gather one fifth of all the grain for seven years. (*To* SECOND GUARD.) Go thou to the south! (*To* THIRD GUARD.) Thou, east! (*To* FOURTH GUARD.) Thou, west!

Lo, I will come upon these governors suddenly, when they are not looking. Let the fear of Pharaoh therefore be in their hearts.

GUARDS (*bowing low*): Lord Governor of Egypt, we obey. (*They hasten out.*)

PHARAOH: Ho, dreamer of dreams, remaineth there anything I may bestow on him I seek to honor? Hast thou an enemy? He, or she, shall feel my wrath. Hast thou a love?

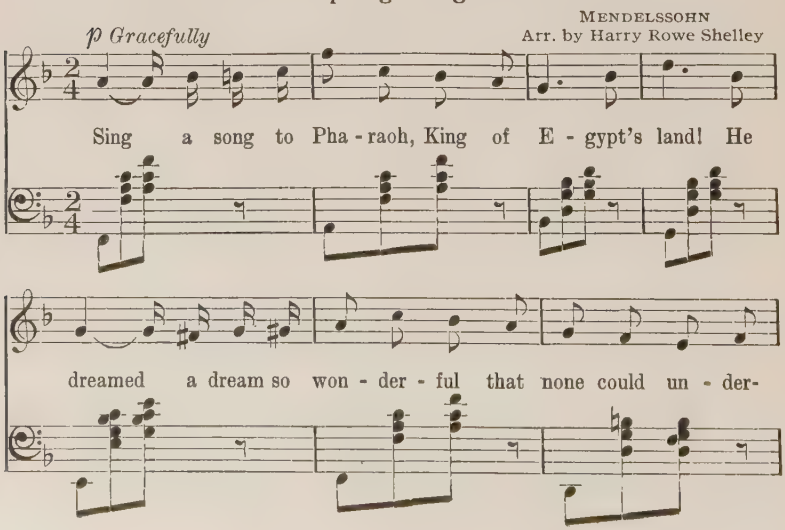
JOSEPH: O gracious lord, I dreamed a dream in prison, and in my dream, love came to me and cast out hate. (*He looks smilingly at* ASENATH.)

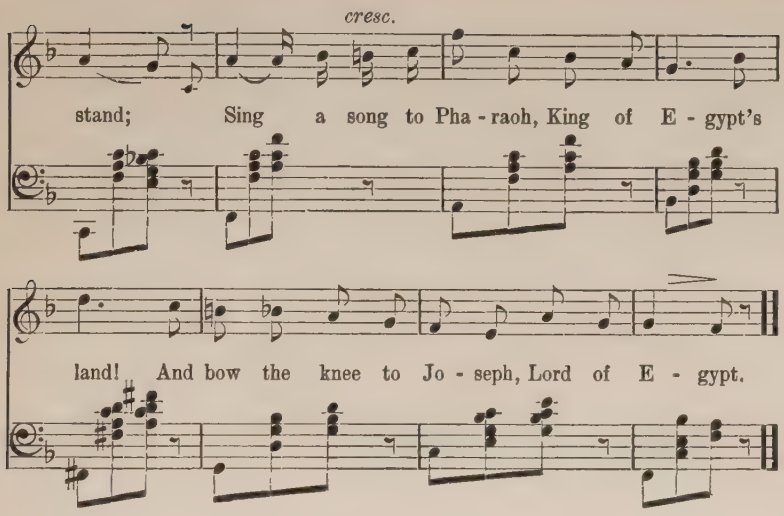
PHARAOH (*leads* ASENATH *forward*): Lo, this is the interpretation of *thy* dream. The daughter of the High Priest pledged her life as to thy truth; thou hast redeemed it, therefore I give her to thee. (*Cries.*) Bow the knee!

ALL THE SLAVES (*bowing low*): Hail to the Governor of Egypt! Hail! All hail!

(*The* SLAVES *sing a little song and dance a little dance, ending with a march out.*)

Spring Song


MENDELSSOHN
Arr. by Harry Rowe Shelley
p Gracefully
Sing a song to Pha - raoh, King of E - gypt's land! He
dreamed a dream so won - der - ful that none could un - der-



Act IV. *The Public Square*

(*The scene is the public square, seven years later. Enter* Slaves *with bags of grain which they arrange in place.*)

First Slave: Lo, it would seem as though in all the world there were famine, save only here in Egypt.

Second Slave: Blessed be the governor!

Ai, there were many to curse him these seven years past, when he gathered in the grain and would not sell, who praise him now, when no green thing will grow in all the land.

Third Slave: Yea, he saveth us alive.

Slaves (*fall on their knees crying*): Hail the governor of Egypt, hail! (Joseph *enters, royally clad, followed by four* Guards.)

JOSEPH: Let the messengers from far countries enter!

(FIRST MESSENGER *enters and bows low.*)

FIRST MESSENGER: O lord, I come with caravans from Ind, bearing silk and spices. Lord, my people die as locusts in the river. Give us corn—

JOSEPH (*to* FIRST SLAVE): Load up his camels to the utmost! Next!

(*Enter* SECOND MESSENGER. *He throws himself on his knees.*)

SECOND MESSENGER: O mighty one, from beyond the seas do I come, with ships from Tarsus and the isles of the north, where the children cry for bread and the land is bare.

JOSEPH: Load up his galleys with grain and take due payment.

(*The* FIRST *and* SECOND SLAVES *and* FIRST *and* SECOND MESSENGERS *go. Enter* THIRD MESSENGER.)

THIRD MESSENGER: Hail, mightiest of the mighty! My people lie to the distant west, where the unknown sea stretches to the end of the world. My people cry to thee for grain, O thou, greater than Pharaoh!

JOSEPH (*looking searchingly at him*): Thou knave! Thy people cry, but thou—thou wouldest get the grain of me, and sell it to thy people at famine prices. I read thee what thou art. Take him and hang him! (GUARDS *seize him.*)

THIRD MESSENGER: Lord! Lord! Have pity, lord! (*They drag him out.*)

JOSEPH: Are there no others?

THIRD SLAVE: There be ten shepherds from the eastward—brethren.

JOSEPH (*quickly*): Ten brethren! What land?

THIRD SLAVE: Lord Governor, they hail from the land of Canaan.

JOSEPH: Bring them hither. (THIRD SLAVE *goes out.* JOSEPH *speaks as though struggling with himself.*) I will not slay them—no! But—they shall feel my power. (*He wraps his turban closer about his face.*)

(*Enter the ten elder* BRETHREN *timidly.* JOSEPH *signs to them to approach.*)

JOSEPH: Ho, men, fear nothing if your errand be honest.

SIMEON: If it be honest to fill one's belly, lord—

JOSEPH: Whence come ye? Let me look upon your faces, all of ye. (*They draw near. He scans them, then speaks with violence.*) Ye are spies! To see the nakedness of the land ye are come!

REUBEN: Nay, my lord, indeed we are true men. Behold thy servants are twelve brethren, sons of one man Israel, a shepherd; and behold the youngest is this day with his father, and one is not.

JOSEPH: One is not? Ye speak in riddles; is he dead?

REUBEN: He was sold a slave into Egypt.

JOSEPH: I doubt your tale. (*He hesitates.*) Your father, he is well?—and—and your youngest brother?

REUBEN (*wondering*): Aye, lord!

JOSEPH: This do and live: If ye be true men, let one of you be bound in the prison house; but go, ye others, and carry corn for the famine of your houses, and bring your youngest brother unto me to prove your tale, and ye shall not die. (*Points to* SIMEON.) Bind me this man. (*The* GUARDS *seize and bind* SIMEON.)

BRETHREN (*on their knees before* JOSEPH): Lord, lord, beseech you!

JOSEPH: Fill ye their sacks with corn and let them go. (JOSEPH *and* SIMEON *with* GUARDS *pass out.*)

(REUBEN *gives* THIRD SLAVE *money for corn.* THIRD SLAVE *goes.*)

JUDAH: We are verily guilty concerning our brother Joseph: therefore is this distress come upon us.

REUBEN: Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear?

DAN: When we return we will search the land for Joseph; we will redeem him from bondage.

LEVI: When we return? We will *never* return, for our father will *never* part with Benjamin.

(*The* SLAVES *enter and give each brother a sack. The* SLAVES *go. The* BRETHREN *wearily shoulder the sacks and start.* GAD *drops his sack which bursts open.* GAD *puts his hand into his sack and draws out gold.*)

GAD: Brothers, behold! My money is returned!

(*The others open their sacks.*)

REUBEN: And mine!

OTHERS: And mine!

JUDAH: What is this thing that God hath done to us? (*They go, casting trembling glances behind them.*)

ACT V. *The Gardens of* JOSEPH

(*Enter* SLAVES. *They set out a long table on trestles, and place upon it goblets of wine and fruits.*)

BENJAMIN

First Slave: Dost know for whom this feast is intended?

Second Slave: Yea!

First Slave: Tell me.

Second Slave: The Lord Governor hath dreamed a dream—

First Slave: I dream too, but no one heeds—

Second Slave: But *his* dreams come to pass. He hath dreamed, I say, that this day the shepherds from the land of Canaan will return.

Third Slave: Wherefore doth he do such honor to simple shepherds?

Second Slave: *Doth* he do them honor? See thou—(*He draws a silver cup from his bosom.*)

First Slave: The governor's own drinking cup! Thou thief! Thou—

Second Slave: Softly, my friend! See you, the Lord Governor bade me conceal this in the sack of the youngest shepherd.

Third Slave: Eh? What is his purpose?

Second Slave: Evil!

First Slave: Shh! Yonder they come!

(*The* Brethren *enter with* Benjamin. Second Slave *advances to them.*)

Second Slave: Are ye the shepherds from the land of Canaan? Ye are to wait here.

Reuben: Sir, first we would seek our brother, who was sold a slave into Egypt—

BENJAMIN: See, see the fruits! I would eat of the fruits yonder!

FIRST SLAVE (*striking him*): Be silent!

THIRD SLAVE: Bow down before the Lord Governor of Egypt.

(JOSEPH *enters. All bow low.*)

JOSEPH: Ah, I see ye are true men. Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake?

REUBEN: Thy servant, our father, is well.

JOSEPH: Is this your youngest brother of whom ye spake? God be gracious unto thee, my son!

BENJAMIN: And may I eat of the fruits upon thy table?

REUBEN: Hush thee!

JOSEPH: Thou mayst eat of all and freely. Be seated, sons of Israel. Go, bring their brother whom I cast in prison. (FIRST SLAVE *goes.*) Fill ye their sacks with corn. (SECOND SLAVE *goes.*) Set ye the bread; pour out the wine. (THIRD SLAVE *busies himself.*)

I now must leave you. O littlest son of Israel, take thou this gift in token of my love. (*He piles a basket high with fruit, gives it to* BENJAMIN *and departs.*)

JUDAH: Wherefore is he so gracious?

LEVI: Lo, I fear him!

(SIMEON *enters hastily.*)

SIMEON: Brothers, brothers, cease ye the feast; let us begone!

REUBEN: What fearest thou?

SIMEON: I know not. I have heard the slaves whisper—he means no good to us. Wherefore should he feast ten shepherds? He, the Lord Governor of Egypt?

OTHERS (*shake their heads*): Wherefore?

SIMEON: He means no good to us. Let us go—go quickly!

(*Enter* FIRST *and* SECOND SLAVES *with sacks of grain.*)

SECOND SLAVE: And here is the sack of the youngest shepherd. (BENJAMIN *comes forward and the sack is deposited on his shoulders.*)

REUBEN: Give ye our thanks to the Lord Governor.

(*The* SLAVES *bow and depart. The* BRETHREN, *some of whom drink a last cup of wine, shoulder their sacks and depart. As the last vanishes the* SOLDIERS *enter in great haste and call after them.*)

FIRST GUARD: Halt, men, halt! (*He runs after them and drags one back; the others follow.*) The governor bade me say, "Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? And wherefore have ye stolen the silver cup from my lord's table?"

REUBEN: The Lord forbid! Behold the money which we found in our sacks' mouths we brought again. How should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?

SIMEON: Thy tongue is the mother of lies!

SECOND GUARD: Be silent, thou! (*Strikes* SIMEON.)

JUDAH: Search ye, and if the cup be found in any man's sack, let him die, and we also will be thy lord's bondsmen.

THIRD GUARD: Let it be so! Open ye up your sacks. (GUARDS *search.*)

FOURTH GUARD: See that they conceal nothing in their garments! (*He pulls the cup from* BENJAMIN'S *sack. He*

shakes BENJAMIN *violently.*) Thou thief! Thou little serpent! Thou child of evil!

(JOSEPH *enters with the slaves behind him.*)

FOURTH GUARD: Lord Governor, behold the thief! Young in years but old in artfulness—and kicking like a ram!

BENJAMIN (*kicking violently*): I did not steal the cup! I did not! I did not!

JUDAH: The lad is no thief, yet—how shall we clear ourselves?

JOSEPH (*coldly*): Ye cannot clear yourselves; ye are my bondsmen. Lo, I have spoken! (*He turns as if to go.*)

JUDAH (*raises arms in prayer*): O God of Israel, save us!

BRETHREN (*raising arms in prayer*): O God, save us! For we are strangers in a strange land, and our cry is unto thee!

(ASENATH *enters hastily.*)

ASENATH: O my lord, thou art safe? I dreamed a dream that I had planted seed and raised a goodly harvest, and lo, the goodliest sheaf of all fell down. I hasted to thee, fearing—(*She looks around.*) Lord, what is this thou doest?

BENJAMIN: O lady, beg thy lord that I may return unto my father!

ASENATH (*puts her arm about him*): My boy, who art thou?

BENJAMIN: The littlest son of Israel the shepherd!

ASENATH: Thou! (*she turns to* JOSEPH.) Lord, what purpose ye with these—*brethren?* (*She waves everyone back; all retire.*)

JOSEPH: Meddle not, Asenath; get thee to thy women! Shall I not take justice?

ASENATH: Lord, forgive! Remember the vow thou madest when in prison.

JOSEPH: A child's weakness!

ASENATH: God was with thee in thy weakness, wilt thou forswear him now? Then wilt thou find thy strength nothingness.

JOSEPH (*hesitates, then beckons* BRETHREN *to approach*): Men, I will be gracious. Get ye in peace unto your father. Only the lad in whose sack the cup was found shall be my bondsman—

SIMEON (*springing forward*): It is a trick! He meant this all along. Thou shalt not have the lad! (*Rushes at* JOSEPH: *the* GUARDS *fall upon him and drag him back.*)

OTHER BRETHREN: Lord, lord, beseech you, lord—

JOSEPH: Lo, I have spoken! (*Sneers.*) Ye should be glad I keep the lad, for so *ye* may divide his inheritance.

JUDAH: *Cursed* be such inheritance!

O my lord, let not thine anger burn against thy servant! We have a father, an old man, and this is the son of his old age, and he loveth him. And he said, "Behold, my wife Rachel had two sons and the elder is departed from me, and if mischief befall this one also ye shall bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave." Therefore I promised him, saying: "If I bring not the lad back to thee, then shall I bear the blame forever."

Now therefore, let me, I pray thee, abide with thee instead of the lad, a bondsman to my lord!

JOSEPH (*in wonder*): Ye would do so? Ye would give yourself into bondage to redeem your brother, the son of Rachel?

JUDAH: Gladly!

JOSEPH: And ye others?

REUBEN: Aye, so be it!

LEVI: We will draw lots.

JOSEPH: Ye sons of Israel, now do I see that in you God hath wrought a wonder, and for your love toward this lad, the son of Rachel, I hail you, "Brethren!"

Let every soldier depart! (SOLDIERS *and* SLAVES *go.*)

(*The* BRETHREN *look at one another in wonder.*)

JOSEPH (*stretches out his arms to* BENJAMIN): I am Joseph! Come near to me, I pray you! I am Joseph your brother whom ye sold into Egypt. Fear not. Ye meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, and he sent me before you to preserve life, and he hath made me ruler over all the land of Egypt.

BRETHREN (*bowing low*): All hail, brother!

BENJAMIN (*who is regarding him tearfully from a distance, suddenly smiles*): I will not bow, no! Me, I will embrace him. (*Runs to* JOSEPH'S *arms.*) O brother, brother, embrace me not so hard! (*He frees himself and takes* JOSEPH'S *hand.*) Come, show me all thy palace and all the land of Egypt. (*Draws himself up.*) I, the littlest son of Israel the shepherd, command *thee*, the Lord Governor of Egypt; Lo, I have spoken! (*Folds his arms on his chest.*)

(*All smile.*)

REUBEN: And art thou Joseph, thou whom God hath made greater even than Pharaoh?

JOSEPH: Nay, I am servant unto Pharaoh; nor may I seek my father, nor leave Egypt. Go ye unto my father, and say, "Come down into Egypt—"

BENJAMIN (*cries*): Lo, he comes even now in search of me! (*Points.*)

(SLAVES *bear* JACOB *in on a litter.*)

ALL: Hail, Israel, hail!

BENJAMIN (*runs to litter*): Father, O father, behold I have found Joseph, my brother! The wild beasts did not eat him after all, and he is become King of Egypt!

JOSEPH (*kneels before litter*): Father, my father!

JACOB: Lo, the Lord is gracious! For God appeared unto me in a vision of the night, saying: "Fear not, but go down to Egypt, and I will make of thee a great nation, and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes."

How thou art grown! Thou art not as the lad that left my dwelling.

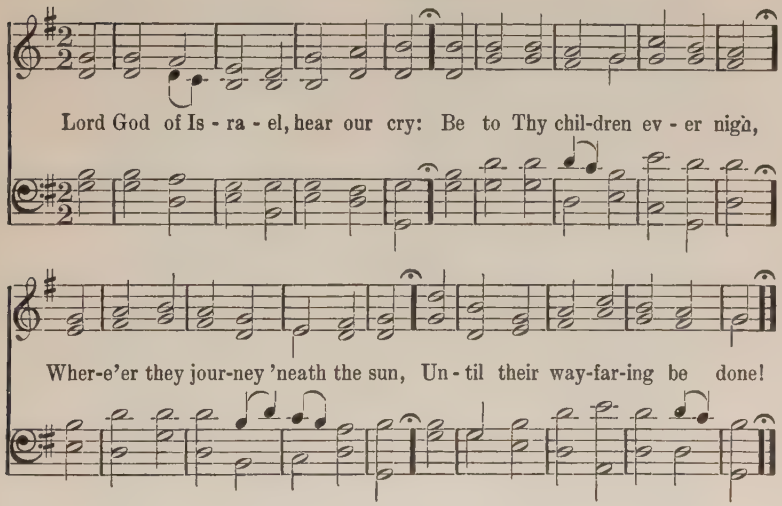
(JOSEPH *leads* ASENATH *forward. Both kneel.*)

JOSEPH: I have wrestled, my father, even as thou, until the dawn of light; but in my darkest hour there came to me this gracious daughter of the High Priest, and bade me forgive. And so I have obtained the blessing.

JACOB (*stretching hands over them*): Yea and thou shalt be blessed. The blessings of the father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors. They shall be on the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren!

SONG (*as all slowly move away*). Music: "Old Hundred."

Old Hundred


Lord God of Is - ra - el, hear our cry: Be to Thy chil-dren ev - er nigà,
Wher-e'er they jour-ney 'neath the sun, Un - til their way-far-ing be done!

MOSES

THE GOLDEN CALF

THE PEOPLE

Prologue.	The obedient Children of Israel (Levites).
Moses.	The rebellious Children of Israel.
Aaron.	The dancing Children.

THE PLACE

The Wilderness of Sinai

This play requires no scenery. It has been given out of doors, in the chancel of churches, on a Greek stage, and against a peacock-blue back-drop.

THE PROPERTIES

Cymbals.

Manna. (Bits of white flower, crumbs, bits of cloth or cotton.)

A platter on which to carry manna.

Gilded bracelets, rings and chains. (These may be made of button-molds, beads, curtain rings, painted with Vernis-Martin gold.)

A calf of gold. { May be made of plastic clay and gilded. May be cut from cardboard and gilded. May be obtained from a statuary company and gilded. The calf must be fastened to a stretcher with poles, so that two or four children may carry it.)

Two tables of stone which may be broken.	Mix plaster of Paris and water to consistency of molasses and pour into box cover the desired size (about twelve by twenty). As the mixture dries, round off the top with a knife to resemble pictures of ten commandments.
Two tables of stone resembling the others.	As these need not be broken, they may be cut from cardboard and painted with plaster of Paris and water.

Palms or green branches for dancing children.
Swords for the rebellious Children of Israel.
Flowers and garlands for Golden Calf.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COSTUMES

Let white (or cream) and black be the prevailing colors.

On Moses' costume sew 3 bands of black, five inches wide, the length of the costume. Several yards of purple cloth for mantle.

On First Rebel's costume sew squares of black (four-inch), checkerboard fashion. Several yards of orange cloth for mantle.

Mantle for Aaron: Sea blue.

Mantle for First Levite: Green or gray.

THE GOLDEN CALF

PROLOGUE

(*Enter the* PROLOGUE. *She carries a platter heaped high with manna. She crosses the stage, casting the manna from her in time to the music, and singing.*)

SONG (Music, "Gottschalk"—Parker. See below).

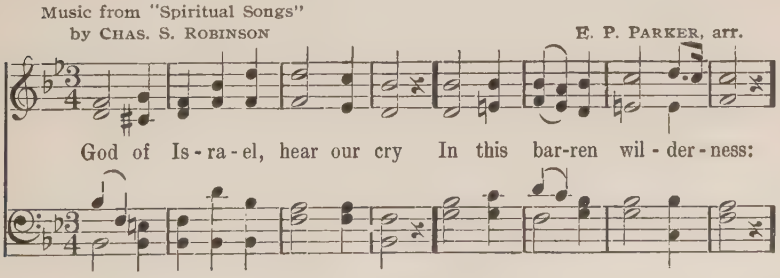
Men of Israel, soft draw nigh.
Manna is falling from the sky,
Falling like the latter rain.
Eat and drink; be filled again.

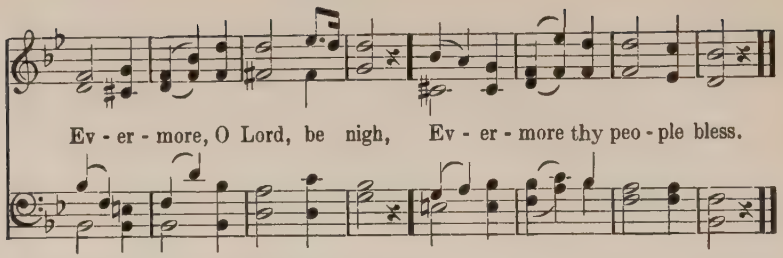
Like the sunshine, like the dew,
Manna is falling down for you.
Men of Israel, now draw nigh,
Take of the blessing from on high.

(*She passes out.*)

(*The* OBEDIENT CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, *the* LEVITES, *enter singing. The men hold their arms to heaven as in prayer; the women cross arms on breast.*)

SONG (Music, "Gottschalk"—Parker).





(*As they approach the manna they stoop and gather, piling it onto platter.*)

Verse 2

For the manna of to-day, for the streams in our distress,
For thy guidance still we pray, evermore thy people bless!

(*The* Rebellious Children of Israel *enter during the singing and survey the others scornfully.*)

First Rebel: What is this ye do, O children of Levi?

First Levite: Why ask ye? We gather manna for the day, even as the Lord God hath commanded.

First Rebel: Manna! I sicken of it!

Second Rebel: Who shall give us flesh to eat?

Third Rebel: Dost remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt for naught?

Fourth Rebel: The cucumbers and the melons? The leeks, the onions, and the garlic?

Fifth Rebel: But now our soul is dried away; we have naught save this manna.

First Rebel: Yea, the gods of Egypt were gods of plenty.

All the Rebels (*raising clenched fists*): Wherefore did we leave Egypt?

(*The* Levites *show their horror.*)

FIRST LEVITE (*advances*):

Be ye ashamed, ye who rebel against the most high God,
He who spreads a cloud for covering,
And fire to give light in the night;
Who when we asked brought quail
And satisfied us with the bread of heaven.

ALL THE LEVITES (*with arms upraised to heaven*):

O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
For he hath brought forth his people with *joy!*
And his chosen with *singing!*

LEVITE WOMAN (*offers platter*): See, brother, eat of the manna and be filled, and render thanks to God most high.

FIRST REBEL:

I thank him for *naught!* (*Dashes platter to earth;* LEVITES *shrink.*)

I will return and serve the gods of Egypt. (*Turns to* REBELS.)

While we abode in Egypt we had plenty.

ALL THE REBELS: Wherefore did we leave Egypt?

FIRST LEVITE: Have ye forgot the cruel bondage of Egypt?

SECOND LEVITE: And how ye cried to God in your sore trouble?

THIRD LEVITE: And he delivered you from your distresses.

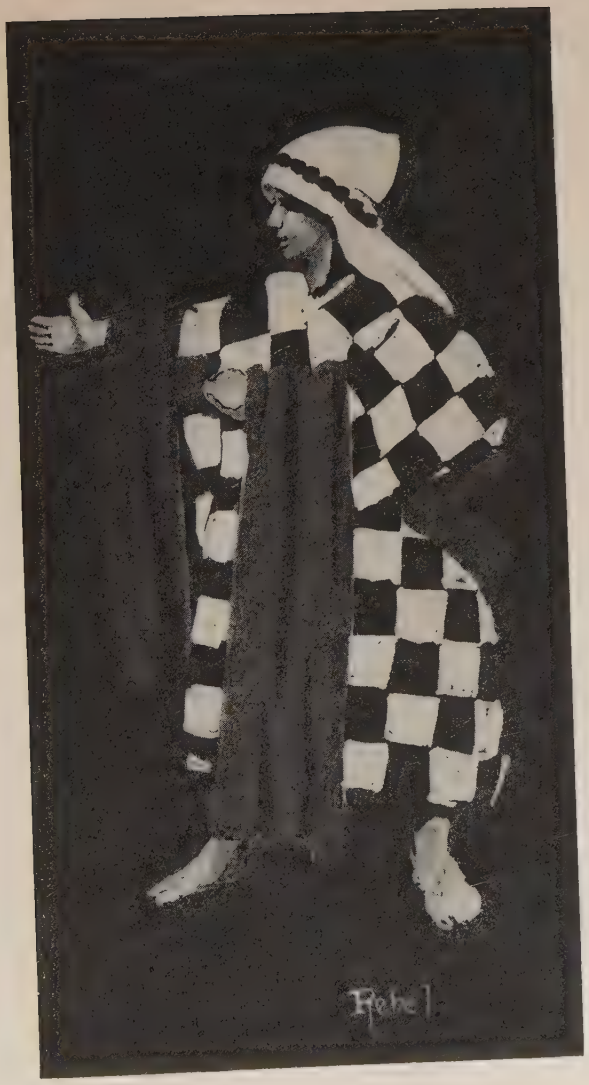
FOURTH LEVITE: For he sent unto us Moses, his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen.

FIRST REBEL (*sullenly*): Where *is* Moses?

FIFTH LEVITE: Thou knowest well he is gone up upon the mount to pray.

FIRST LEVITE: Let us await him yonder by Mount Sinai.

LEVITE



FIRST REBEL

(*The* LEVITES *with arms raised to heaven move off to the left chanting*):

O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
For he hath brought forth his people with JOY!
And his chosen with SINGING!

(*The* FIRST REBEL *follows them a short distance, angrily; then he turns. As he does so he sees* AARON *approaching from right. He addresses others quickly.*)

FIRST REBEL: Yonder now cometh Aaron; *he* shall lead us back to Egypt.

(*All look eagerly toward right as* AARON *enters slowly.*)

FIRST REBEL: O Aaron, up, up!

ALL THE REBELS: O Aaron, up, up!

FIRST REBEL:

Do thou, O Aaron, lead us back to Egypt!
Make us gods which shall go before us!
For as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.

SECOND REBEL: Forty days and nights is he departed from us.

AARON: Ye know well he prayeth on Mount Sinai for Israel, his sake.

THIRD REBEL (*mutters*): Let him pray!

FOURTH REBEL: Do thou, O Aaron, make for us a god like to the calf of Egypt.

AARON (*shaking his head*): The thing is sin.

(*The* REBELS *hiss and advance threateningly, shaking their fists.*)

FIRST REBEL: Make us a god!

ALL THE REBELS: Make us a god like to the calf of Egypt, lest we smite thee!

(*They all push threateningly against him; he cowers; then, pushing them back, advances, and spreading out his palms, shrugs.*)

AARON: If ye make me to sin, yours is the evil.

FIRST REBEL: Lo, ours shall be the punishment thereof.

AARON: Break ye off the golden rings which are in the ears of your wives and of your sons and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

FIRST REBEL (*to others*): Go ye throughout the camp and bring the bracelets, the cunning work in gold and silver, the rings and chains.

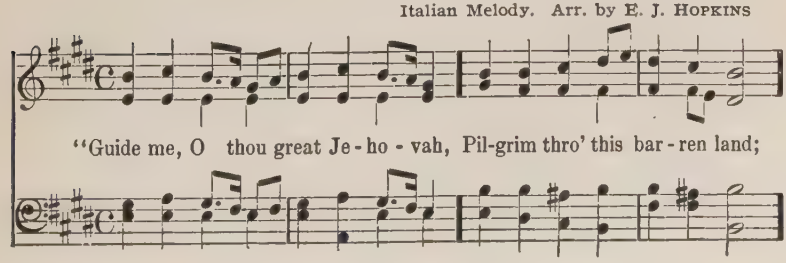
OTHER REBELS: We hasten. (*They run off to the right.*)

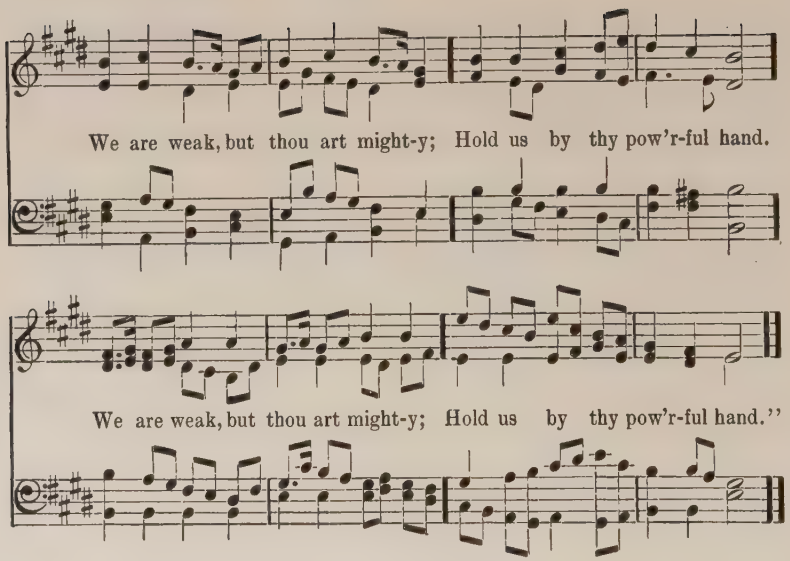
(AARON *and the* FIRST REBEL *pace to and fro discussing in pantomime the making of the calf, its height, width, etc. Faint singing is heard from Mount Sinai on the left. The music swells.*)

SONG OF LEVITES: "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah!" (*Music, "Sicilian Mariner's Song."*)

Sicily

Italian Melody. Arr. by E. J. HOPKINS





AARON (*on last line*): Hark to the singing!

FIRST REBEL (*shrugs*): It is but the children of Levi; they watch for Moses. Yai! It were better for us to serve in the land of Egypt, than that we die here in the wilderness.

(*Enter the* OTHER REBELS *carrying gold. The* SECOND REBEL *bears a platter to* AARON. *Each advances slowly and bows before* AARON, *heaps his gold on the platter, speaks, then retires with folded arms to background.*)

SECOND REBEL: These from the tribe of Benjamin!

THIRD REBEL: These from Judah!

FOURTH REBEL: And these from Gad!

FIFTH REBEL: And Asher! More will follow.

THE REBELS BRING GOLD TO AARON TO BUILD THE GOLDEN CALF

(*If there are more rebels, these may bring gold from the other tribes.*)

First Rebel: Hasten (*all flock about* Aaron)—and let us make the golden image! Let us make us a god to guard us!

Aaron (*raising platter of gold on high and moving out, to the right*): For the Lord Jehovah is a jealous God!

All the Rebels (*following*): Yea, the Lord Jehovah is a jealous God!

Song of Levites (*in distance—continuation of above*):

"Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing streams do flow;
Let the fiery cloudy pillar
Lead us all our journey through!
Let the fiery cloudy pillar
Lead us all our journey through!"

Act II

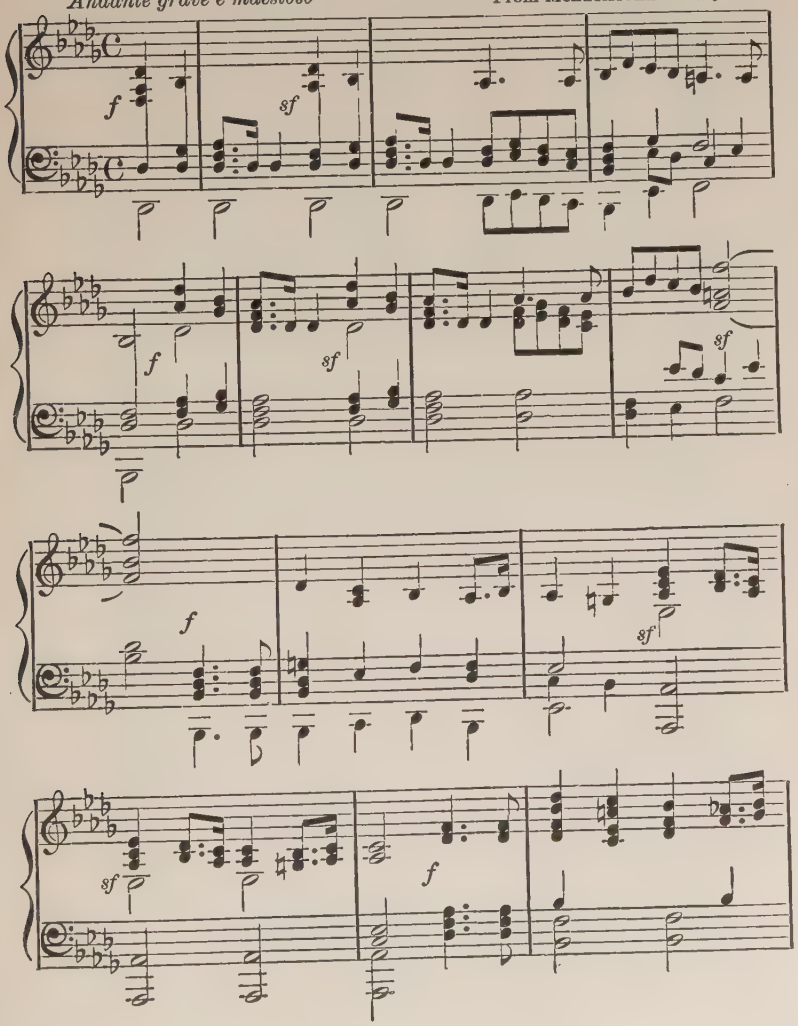
(*It is several days later. The procession in honor of the Golden Calf enters.* Aaron; Bearers of the Golden Calf; Dancing Children, *single file;* Rebels.)

(*The* Dancing Children *carry palms or green branches in the right hand, which is extended stiffly before them; the left hand is extended behind them with palm horizontal. With each step the knee is lifted high and the toe pointed down.*)

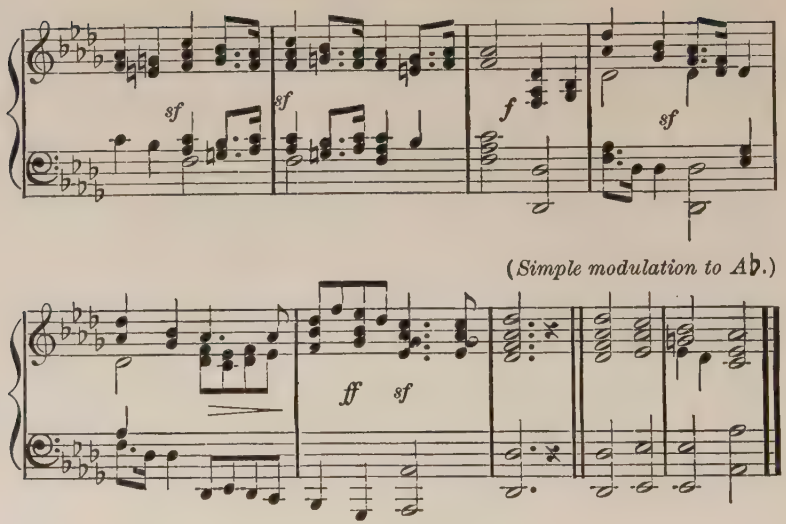
Music: "Cry of the Prophets of Baal," from Mendelssohn's Elijah.

"Baal, We Cry to Thee"

Andante grave e maestoso From Mendelssohn's "Elijah"



"Baal, We Cry to Thee"—Concluded



Steps

Right, left, right, back on left.
Right, left, right, back on left.
Right, left, right, left, right, left, right, back on left.

(*This movement is repeated until all are in position about the Golden Calf.* AARON *on right, calf in center,* REBELS *on left,* CHILDREN *around calf.*)

AARON (*ironically*): These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt.

SONG. (*Music as above*):

DANCE

LO, we cry to thee;. . . . *Right, left, right, back on left.* (*Toward calf.*)

DANCE.

Hear, O Serapis!.....*Right, left, right, feet together.* (*From calf.*)

Hear and answer us!..*Raise arms slowly on eight counts.*

(*Repeat.*)

First Rebel (*bows before calf*): Lead us back again to Egypt!

(*Song and dance as above.*)

First Rebel: Protect us from the wrath of Jehovah!

(*Song and dance as above.*)

(*The* First Levite *enters hastily, followed by other* Levites.)

First Levite: O men of Israel, wherefore do ye bring the wrath of God upon us?

First Rebel: Hold thy peace! *This* is the god for Israel!

First Levite: This? Was it this beast which your own hands have fashioned, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt? Which parted Red Sea waters so that they were driven back? Which brought Israel forth with gladness, while Pharaoh and his host sank in the sea? Was it—

First Rebel (*furiously*): Take him away! (Other Rebels *fall upon and force him back.*) Bring forth the garlands; crown ye the calf of gold!

(*The littlest girls advance with garlands and crown calf.*)

(*Song and dance as above, but repeated twice. While the others are dancing one dancer, carrying cymbals, advances to front. She stands swaying in time to the music, with one*

foot advanced. After the song has been sung three times all sing the following):

DANCE OF SINGLE DANCER

SONG:

Bow ye to the ground!..*Clash of cymbals high over head.*
Let the cymbals sound!..*Clash of cymbals high over head.*
To great Serapis!.....*She marches to one side: One, two, three, turn on four. She marches back: One, two, three, feet together on four, and clash of cymbals.*

(*During the music the* LEVITES *catch sight of some one descending the mount.* [*Left.*] *They call one another's attention to it. As the song ends* AARON *also perceives some one.*)

AARON (*with a loud cry*): Ai! Ai! Yonder approacheth Moses!

PEOPLE (*huddle to right, crying*): Ai! Ai!

(MOSES *enters slowly; he carries two tables of stone. He glances from the people to the calf, then back to the people.*)

MOSES (*sternly*): What is this that ye have builded?

FIRST REBEL (*advances recklessly*): O Moses, we weary here in the wilderness. Aaron hath builded us a golden image, even the likeness of the calf of Egypt; *it* shall lead us back to Egypt!

REBELS (*growl*): Aye, to Egypt!

MOSES (*to* AARON): What did the people unto thee that thou hast brought such great sin upon them?

AARON (*deprecating*): Let not the anger of my lord wax hot! Thou knowest this people that they are set on evil.

They said, "Make us gods which shall go before us," and I said, "Bring me your gold." And I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

MOSES: O wicked and accursed people! And shall this image be the Lord your God?

Have ye not known, have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundation of the earth? It is *he* that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers—that stretcheth out the heavens—(*He lifts the tables of stone.*)

Behold these tables of stone; upon them God hath graven his commandments; he hath made his covenant with you while ye—ye have run after the gods of Egypt!

O wicked and accursed—

PEOPLE (*surging forward*): Let us hearken to the laws!

(MOSES *slowly lifts the tables of stone on high; the* PEOPLE *recoil.*)

MOSES: Ye—are—not—WORTHY!

(*He dashes the tables to the ground; they shatter to fragments. A shuddering cry goes through the people.*)

FIRST REBEL (*cries*): He hath destroyed the word of the Lord!

PEOPLE (*cry*): He hath destroyed the word of the Lord!

FIRST LEVITE (*rushes forward, crying*): He hath broken the commandment of our God!

PEOPLE (*surging forward*): He hath broken the commandment of our God!

MOSES: Take ye the image of the beast and grind it to powder, and strew it upon the water and drink ye of it!

FIRST LEVITE: It shall be done.

FIRST REBEL: Ye shall not do this thing! The image is ours; our gold hath builded it!

MOSES (*quickly*): The silver is mine, the gold also is mine, saith the Lord God Almighty!

FIRST REBEL (*draws his sword*): The image is ours! Ho, men of Israel, up for the gods of Egypt!

(*The* REBELS *flourish their swords.*)

MOSES (*commandingly, raising his hand on high*): Who is on the Lord's side?

LEVITES: I! I! I! (*They flock to* MOSES, *on the left.*)

MOST OF THE REBELS: I! I! I! (*They join* LEVITES.)

FIRST REBEL: Save me, O Serapis! (*Flings himself before the calf, on right.*)

REMAINING REBELS: Great Serapis, save! (*Fling themselves before calf.*)

PEOPLE (*shout*): Jehovah! Jehovah! (*They surge against* REBELS, *drag them off stage, then return.*)

AARON (*bows humbly*): What shall be done to purge us from our sin?

MOSES: Take the image from hence, for it is abomination in the sight of the Lord.

(*The bearers remove the image.* MOSES *stands with arms uplifted; he prays. The people kneel before him, the women with arms crossed on breast, the men with arms lifted to heaven.*)

MOSES: O Lord, this people have sinned a great sin and have made them gods of gold; yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written—(*There is a pause while* MOSES *listens as though to the voice of God; then he slowly lowers his arms and addresses the people.*)

Hew ye two tables of stone like to the first, and in the morning I will seek Mount Sinai. It may be God will forget his wrath toward you this day, and give again the law to Israel.

Go now!

(*The* PEOPLE *depart slowly with drooping heads. The* CHILDREN *draw near to* MOSES.)

ONE CHILD (*shyly*): O Lord Moses, thou wilt find grace in the sight of the Lord, for thou art such a man as the Lord loveth, while we be sinful men.

ANOTHER CHILD: Didst thou see God? How didst thou feel when thou didst see the Lord?

MOSES (*humbly*): Like—like a little child!

(*Faint singing in the distance, in which* MOSES *and the* CHILDREN *join, as they pass out.*)

MUSIC ("Sicilian Mariner's Song." For music, see p. 61):

Guide us, O thou loving Father;
Lead us in the path aright!
We are sheep, but thou art shepherd;
Lead us by thy powerful light!
Loving Father, loving Father,
All are children in thy sight.

Act III. *Forty Days Later*

(*Enter the* First Levite; *he shades his eyes, gazes aloft and calls.*)

First Levite: Ho, hither!

(*Enter* Woman *and* Child.)

First Levite: See'st thou aught?

Woman: I see a shining light upon Mount Sinai.

Child: I be afeared!

Woman: Be not fearful of the light, for it is God. (*Bends over* Child.)

Child: Is God upon Mount Sinai?

Woman:

There and here!
He sendeth out his light and truth to lead us;
His love enfoldeth us.

(*Enter all the rest of the* Children of Israel, *marveling at the light.*)

Second Levite: Behold the light!

Third Levite: God will blind us with his wrath!

Fourth Levite:

O let us cry to God in our sore trouble!
He will deliver us from our distresses.

(*All the* People *raise arms to heaven and cry*):

O God of Israel,
O send out thy light and thy truth!
Let them lead us—

(A Child *runs in and points to left.*)

Child: Moses cometh yonder!

(*The* PEOPLE *shrink away in fear. The voice of* MOSES *is heard in distance.*)

MOSES: Ho, men of Israel! (*He enters.*)
Ho, children, beloved of the Lord, draw nigh! (*They approach and fall on their knees.*)
Be glad and rejoice!
For God hath renewed his covenant with Israel.
Read ye the law! (*He holds the new tables of stone aloft so all may see.*)
Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one* Lord!

ALL (*read*):
Thou shalt have none other gods before me!
Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image!

MOSES: Nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them, for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

ALL (*read*): Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain!

MOSES: For the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain.

ALL (*read*): Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy!

MOSES: Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor

MOSES: "READ YE THE LAW!"

thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day. Wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it.

ALL (*read*): Honor thy father and thy mother!

MOSES: That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

ALL (*read*):

Thou shalt not kill!
Thou shalt not commit adultery!
Thou shalt not steal!
Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor!
Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's!

MOSES: And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?

AARON (*strides forward with hand uplifted*): Ashamed be they who worship graven images, who boast themselves of idols!

Worship the Lord Jehovah, all ye gods!

PEOPLE:

For he is a God gracious and full of compassion,
And plenteous in mercy and truth! (*They raise their arms to heaven.*)

SONG: "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah!" (For music, see page 61, "Sicilian Mariner's Song.")

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through a barren land!
We are weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold us by thy powerful hand.
We are weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold us by thy powerful hand.

"Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing streams do flow!
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead us all our journey through!
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead us all our journey through."

(*All pass out during last verse.*)

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH

THE PEOPLE

Jephthah, a leader in Israel.
His Warriors.
The Daughter of Jephthah.
Her Maidens.
The Old Nurse.

THE PLACE

Outside the tent of Jephthah, pitched on the Mizpah.

The only scenery required is a peacock-blue back-drop; but have a portion of a tent showing, if possible. A striped curtain, something resembling an awning, supported roughly on poles, will do.

THE PROPERTIES

A distaff.
Embroidery frames.
Spears.
Shields.
Horn.

SUGGESTIONS AS TO COSTUMES

Have the maidens in the most delicate, softly falling draperies. Have the warriors in brilliant scarlet and vermilion, with white sugar-loaf caps. Bushy hair, if possible. Skins of animals bound about waist with cords of strong color. Have them as barbaric as may be.

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPTHTHAH

(*The old* NURSE *is seated at the door of the tent with her distaff. The* MAIDENS *are clustered about, engaged in embroidery. The* DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH *comes swiftly from opening of tent and stands listening.*)

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:

Hark ye!
Hear ye no distant sounds?
Like to the prancings, the prancings of the mighty ones?

THE MAIDENS:

We hear nothing.

THE NURSE:

Daughter of Jephthah, stand not idly waiting!
We can hear naught as yet.

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:

'Tis now three days since he went forth to battle,
My father and all his host with him.
Three days are long—

THE NURSE:

Because thou restest idle.
Prepare food; make ready the wine for Jephthah and his mighty ones
If he smite the men of Ammon—

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH (*scornfully*):

If he smite them—
He *will* smite them with the edge of the sword;
He will slay them with a very great slaughter.

THE NURSE:

Still—if he smite them *not,*
Prepare food, make ye ready, as slaves, to serve the men of Ammon.

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:

If he smite them not—but he *will* smite them;
He will possess their border;
Trembling shall lay hold upon them:
But Israel shall be glad and rejoice.
Israel shall cry: "Great is Jephthah!
Greatest of all the sons of Gilead!"

THE MAIDENS:

Yea, Jephthah is a mighty man of valor!

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:

Though the men of Israel despised him,
Though the sons of Gilead took up a cry against him:
Thou, Jephthah, shalt not inherit,
Thou, Jephthah, the son of an harlot!
Yet when their enemies rose up against them,
Even the men of Ammon,
Then they cried unto my father, Jephthah, to lead them.

THE MAIDENS (*rising and folding embroidery*):

Yea, Jephthah is a mighty man of valor.
He will smite the men of Ammon;
He will possess their borders;
Trembling shall lay hold upon them.
But Israel shall be glad and rejoice;
Israel shall cry: "Great is Jephthah!
Greatest of all the sons of Gilead!"

THE NURSE:

If Jephthah smite them,
Down on your knees to give *Jehovah* glory!

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH (*impatiently*):

Peace, nurse! Hark yet again!

ONE MAID:

Lo, I am fearful.

ANOTHER MAID (*valiantly*):

As for me, I trust in Jephthah and his might—

A THIRD MAID:

But if they slay him?
If they slay Jephthah?
They will come upon us suddenly—
They will destroy us utterly—

(*Shouting in the far distance.*)

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:

Hark! I hear shouting—songs in the far distance—
Do ye not hear them, maidens?

THE MAIDENS (*eagerly pressing forward*):
Aye, we hear them.

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH (*clasping her hands*):
They shout, "Jephthah! Jephthah!"
He comes, my father comes!

THE MAIDENS:
He loveth thee as father ne'er loved daughter;
He crowneth thee with the fruit of all his glory.

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:
Get ye within and gather palms to straw before him;
Get ye the timbrels to greet him;
Meet we him with song and dance!
Cry: Greatest is Jephthah of all the sons of Israel!
Cry: Of all the sons of Gilead, greatest is Jephthah!

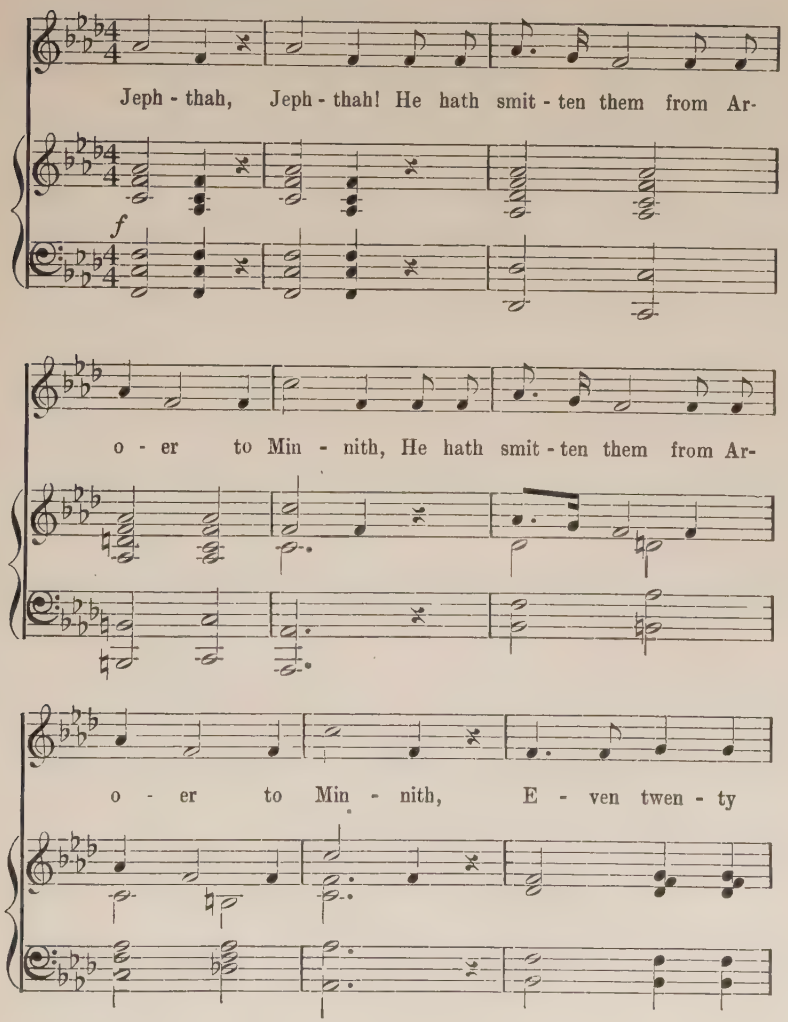
(*The* MAIDENS *hasten into the tent. The* DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH *casts one last glance in the direction of the distant shouting, then follows. The old* NURSE *rises feebly.*)

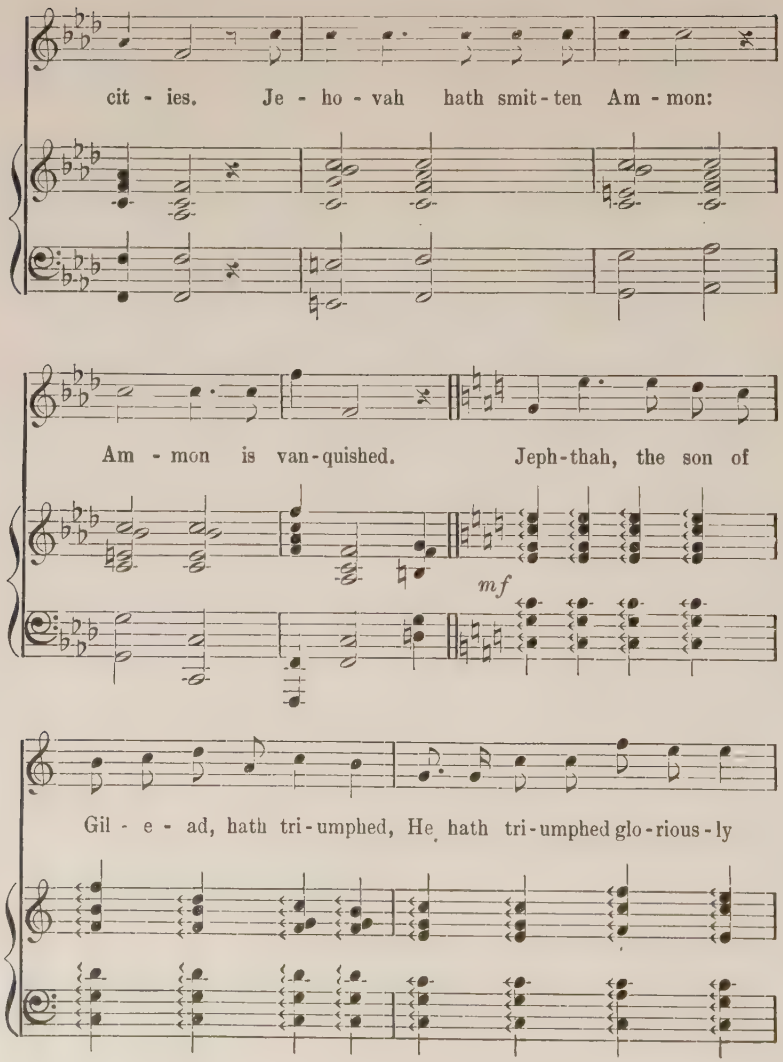
THE NURSE (*shaking her head*):
She should be on her knees before Jehovah!
She should give *God* the glory.
For the mighty shall not deliver himself,
Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow.
And he that is swift of foot shall not deliver himself,
Neither he that rideth the horse deliver himself,
Except the *Lord of Hosts* shall strengthen his hand. (*She passes within tent.*)

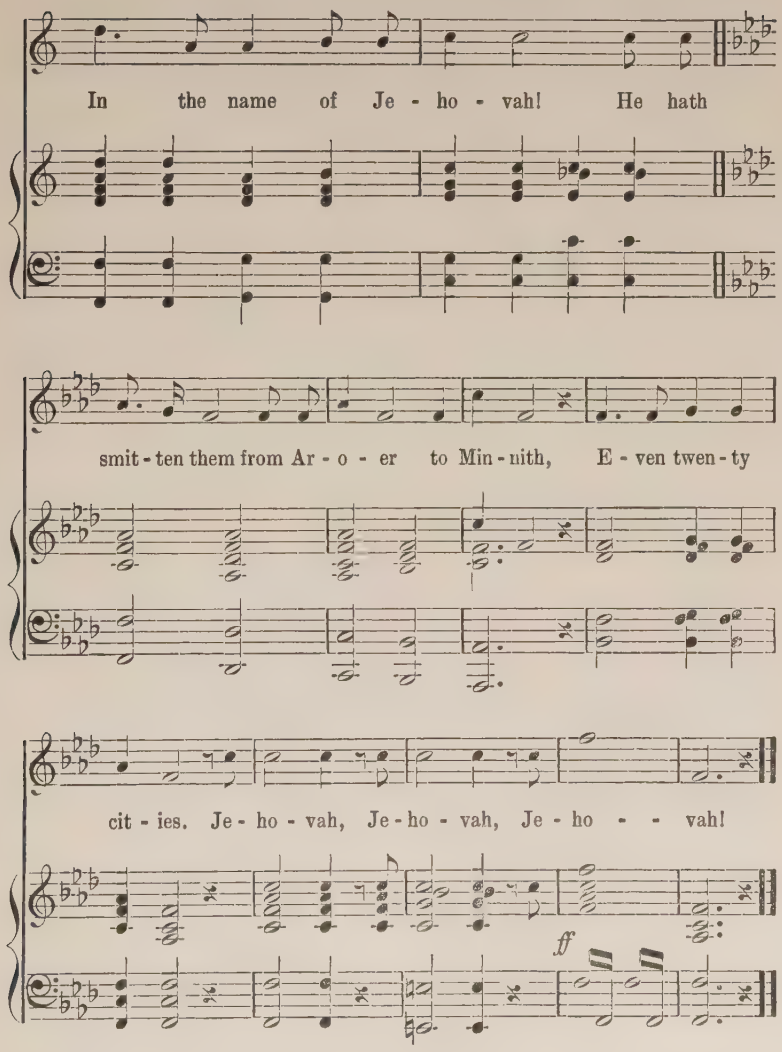
(*The shouting grows louder. Cries of* "Jephthah! Jephthah!" *grow in volume until they break into a cry of triumph.*)

SONG: Music by Kate Spear Cornell. (By permission.)

Jephthah, Jephthah!

KATE SPEAR CORNELL

Jephthah, Jephthah!—Continued


cit - ies. Je - ho - vah hath smit - ten Am - mon:
Am - mon is van - quished. Jeph - thah, the son of
mf
Gil - e - ad, hath tri - umphed, He hath tri - umphed glo - rious - ly

Jephthah, Jephthah!—Concluded

(*During the latter part of the song* JEPHTHAH *and his* WARRIORS *pour in tumultuously. They are clad in red and carry the weapons of war.*)

JEPHTHAH (*halts them suddenly, crying*):
Ho, men, halt ye!
Fall back, fall back, I say, from the dwelling place of Jephthah!

THE WARRIORS (*brandishing their weapons*):
Jephthah! Jephthah!

JEPHTHAH (*raises his hand: the men silence*):
Know ye all men:
On the day we smote the men of Ammon,
While it was yet early in the morning,
I, Jephthah, vowed a vow unto the Lord.

ONE WARRIOR: That thou hast sworn an oath is known throughout the host of Israel.

ANOTHER WARRIOR: But no one is cunning to know what oath thou swarest.

THIRD WARRIOR: Tell us thy vow, O Jephthah!

JEPHTHAH:
I vowed a vow,
If the Lord would smite for me the men of Ammon—

THE WARRIORS (*shout*):
He hath smitten Ammon!
Ammon is perished!

JEPHTHAH:
Ammon is perished.
And that which I have sworn I will perform,
For I am Jephthah, leader in Israel!

THE WARRIORS (*crowding forward*): Tell us thy vow.

JEPHTHAH:

I vowed a sacrifice to God.

(*The* WARRIORS *fall back.*)

ONE WARRIOR: Thou wilt sacrifice one of us?

THE OTHER WARRIORS (*pressing upon him with threatening weapons*):

No, no, thou shalt not!
Thou art mad with lust for slaughter!

JEPHTHAH (*scornfully unmoved*):

Be bold and quit you like men!
Think ye that we may win, yea twenty cities,
And pay no price thereof?

ONE WARRIOR:

Thou hast won the victory;
Thou shalt pay the price.

JEPHTHAH:

Yea, I will pay it. (*He blows horn.*)
Fall back, ye men, from the dwelling place of Jephthah;
Observe ye well who first shall cross the threshold,
For whoso *first* shall greet me—

(SONG, *or* CHANT *from within tent*):

Hail to Jephthah!
Break forth and sing, ye virgin daughters of Israel!
Break forth in the dance!

(*The* DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH *and the* MAIDENS, *her companions, appear in the dance. The old* NURSE *follows.*)

JEPHTHAH (*drops his spear and shield*):
Woe, woe! My daughter!

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH (*kneeling before him*):
Hail, O my father!
Hail, Jephthah and ye mighty men, his warriors,
Ye who have served right gloriously in the battle!
Would that I too could serve after woman's fashion!

THE MAIDENS:
Hail, Jephthah and ye mighty men, his warriors!

THE WARRIORS (*raising spears*):
He hath smitten them from Aroer to Minnith,
Even twenty cities!
Hail, Jephthah, hail!

JEPHTHAH (*even as they speak*):
Woe! Woe! Woe!
Jehovah has caused my sun to go down at noon,
And darkened the earth on a clear day.

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:
Why dost thou fill the air with lamentations?
And wherefore dost thou cry so grievously?
I pray thee, O my father, make known to me thy sorrow!
I pray thee share thy cup of sadness with me!
For thou hast smitten them from Aroer to Minnith,
Even twenty cities!
Be glad, O my father, with this thy daughter!

JEPHTHAH:
Alas, my daughter, thou art the one that troubleth me.
For I vowed a vow; to Jehovah I sware it.
The blossom thereof was sweet, but the fruit is bitter.

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER IS THE FIRST TO GREET HIM

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:

And hast thou vowed a vow unto the Lord?
Then what thou swarest, that wilt thou perform.
And *I* will not be for an hindrance to thee,
For that which thou hast sworn, I will swear also.
For thou hast smitten them from Aroer to Minnith,
Even twenty cities!
And thou and I will keep the oath thou swarest.

JEPHTHAH (*interrupts*):

Not I! Not I! Jehovah hath done the smiting;
Now he smiteth Jephthah!

THE NURSE:

Tell her thy vow!

THE WARRIORS:

Aye, tell her thy vow, O Jephthah!

(*The* DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH *falls back and looks inquiringly from one man to another.*)

JEPHTHAH (*laying his hands on her*):

Hearken, my daughter,
I have vowed a sacrifice upon God's altar,
A burnt-offering—

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH (*eagerly*):

The firstlings of the flock?

JEPHTHAH:

Nay!

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:

All thy flocks and herds and cattle?
It matters naught, my father!

JEPHTHAH:
Hark to my vow: (*He raises his arms as though in prayer.*)
Lord, if thou smite for me the men of Ammon,
That *my* name be renowned in Israel,
I will sacrifice to thee—I cannot say it!

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH (*cries*):
Me, O my father?

JEPHTHAH:
O wherefore must *thou* be the *first* to greet me?
The *first* to cross my threshold?

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH (*interrupts, crying*):
O my father! O my father!
And shall I be the wage of victory?
And must my body pay for thee the price,
Because I was the first to greet thy coming?

THE WARRIORS (*sing*):
He hath smitten them from Aroer to Minnith,
Even twenty cities—
Jehovah! Jehovah! Jehovah!

A WARRIOR:
Who art *thou* to grudge the price of victory?

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:
Let me weep, O my father;
Let me wail for the fate of this, my body.

THE MAIDENS (*surrounding her*):
Let her weep, O Jephthah!
Let us sorrow with thee, Jephthah's daughter.
To man, the glory!
To woman, the sacrificial fire!

THE NURSE:

Nay, to *God* the glory!
Fail not to give the Lord Jehovah glory!
For we have gloried in Jephthah,
We have trusted in the multitude of our mighty men;
This is the punishment thereof.

THE WARRIORS:

The Lord is a man of war!
The Lord, is his name!

THE NURSE (*scornfully*):

Behold, God is great,
And *man* knoweth him not. (*She folds the* DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH *in her arms.*)
So it hath been through all the ages, nursling:
Men have gone forth with song and arms and banners;
Women have remained to feed the altar.
Yea, woman hath offered herself a willing sacrifice,
To the God of battles.
So it hath been;
So it shall be,
While woman shall *bear* and *breed* the man to war,
So long shall she be sacrifice.
Weep not, O Jephthah's daughter.

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:

I will weep no longer.
I will bear me as becomes my father's daughter.

JEPHTHAH (*breaking out fiercely*):

Jehovah doth not require this sacrifice;
It would be for an abomination to him—

SACRIFICIAL DANCE

THE WARRIORS (*grimly*):
Thou hast vowed the vow;
Thou shalt not slack to pay it. (JEPHTHAH *turns back.*)

THE MAIDENS (*looking at* JEPHTHAH):
He loveth her as father ne'er loved daughter.

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH (*approaching* JEPHTHAH):
O my father,
Let me go down upon the mountains of Israel,
Let me mourn for a brief space, with the virgins of Israel, my companions.

THE WARRIORS (*starting forward*):
No! no!
Thinkest thou thus to 'scape the fire?

JEPHTHAH (*forces the men back and turns to his daughter*):
Go!
Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Jephthah's daughter.

(*The* MAIDENS *pass into tent; the* DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH *kneels before him.*)

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:
O my father,
Had I known of thy vow aforetime,
Surely still I had been the first to greet thy coming.
Who should fulfill thy vow save me, thy daughter?
Not alone to man the triumph and to woman the sorrow!
To me both, both, the fire and the victory!
For I shall be the price of twenty cities.

THE WARRIORS (*raising their spears in salute*):
Hail, daughter of Jephthah!

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH:

Fear not, ye men of Israel;
I will return to you when the hour cometh;
When the hour nears it shall find me ready. (*Turns to* JEPHTHAH.)
For he hath smitten them in the strength of Jehovah,
He hath smitten them from Aroer to Minnith,
Even twenty cities.
And I, his daughter, pay the price right gladly.

(JEPHTHAH *places his arm about her and they pass into tent followed by the* WARRIORS, *singing.*)

SONG: Jephthah! Jephthah!
He hath smitten them from Aroer to Minnith,
Even twenty cities.
Jehovah hath smitten Ammon; Ammon is perished.
Jephthah, the son of Gilead, hath triumphed;
He hath triumphed gloriously,
In the name of Jehovah.
He hath smitten them from Aroer to Minnith,
Even twenty cities.
Jehovah! Jehovah! Jehovah!

(*The last* WARRIOR *lifts aloft the spear and shield of* JEPHTHAH.)

LAST WARRIOR:

How are the mighty—fallen!
And the weapons of war—perished! (*He goes.*)

(*The* DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH *and the* MAIDENS *issue from tent, in a sacrificial dance, then pass down upon the mountains.*)

RUTH AND BOAZ

THE PEOPLE

PROLOGUE.

NAOMI.	BOAZ.
RUTH, her daughters-in-law.	FIRST KINSMAN.
ORPAH, her daughters-in-law.	BOY ATTENDANT.
ZELOPHEHAD, a boy.	HEAD REAPER.
KETURAH, a girl.	ELDERS OF CITY. (At least five.)

At least three REAPERS, two BINDERS and two GLEANERS.

THE PLACE

ACT I. The Fields near Bethlehem.
ACT II. The Fields of Boaz.
ACT III. The Same.
ACT IV. Outside the Gates of the City.

As this play is intended for out-of-door performance, the same scene will do for all.

The scene is a harvest field. Cover the ground with yellow straw. On the left have a pile of straw, hay, or leaves covered with straw. On the right, place a stack of corn, with bright fodder corn at its base. Stick stalks of corn across the back, and in such a way that the reapers may enter through cornstalks. A curtain may be made by sticking cornstalks in the ground between audience and stage. A heap of stones for altar.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COSTUMES

Let yellows, whites and tans be the prevailing colors. Let Ruth wear deep sea-blue, in first two acts, white in last two acts. Let Boaz wear white or terra cotta; Naomi, purple; Orpah, yellow.

THE PROPERTIES

Fruit or grain for Prologue.
Sickles for reapers.
Bundles for Naomi, Ruth and Orpah.
Flowers for Keturah, also ears of corn.
A plate of parched corn.
Jugs for beverages.
An armful of barley, if possible; if not, corn.
A light.
A rug, goblet and pitcher, basket of grapes and plate of cakes, for boy.

PROLOGUE

RUTH AND BOAZ

PROLOGUE

(*Enter a* CHILD *clad in yellow, yellow veiled, with clusters of grapes hanging from either side of her head, and carrying fruit, grain, or a horn of plenty. She speaks.*)

"We, to-day, amidst our flowers
And fruits, have come to own again
The blessings of the summer hours,
The early and the latter rain;

"To see our Father's hand once more
Reverse for us the plenteous horn
Of Autumn, filled and running o'er
With fruit and flower and golden corn.

"Once more the liberal year laughs out
O'er richer stores than gems or gold;
Once more with harvest song and shout
Is Nature's bloodless triumph told.

"Our common mother rests and sings,
Like Ruth among her garnered sheaves;
Her lap is full of goodly things;
Her brow is bright with autumn leaves."

—*Whittier.*

"To God be the glory forever; we bear
To the Lord of the harvest our wheat with the tare:
What we lack in our work may He find in our will,
And winnow in mercy the good from the ill."

—*Whittier.*

(*The* PROLOGUE *goes.*)

(*Two* REAPERS *advance with sickles and cut down the curtain of corn, then retire. Shouts of the reapers are heard from without.*)

Ho, for the harvest! (*Notes: F, F, F, F, Middle C.*)
Ho, for the harvest! (*Notes: A, A, A, A, F.*)
Ho! (*High C.*)
Ho! (*B Flat.*)
Ho! (*A.*)

(*The* REAPERS, BINDERS *and* GLEANERS *rush in, in the manner of "Crack-the-whip." They shout*):

The barley! The barley! The yellow corn! (*They fall apart, laughing.*)

FIRST REAPER: Ohé! Ohé! Who shall be first to the barley field? Ohé!

FIRST GLEANER: A race! A race! (*All race out, laughing and shouting.*)

(*Enter from back* NAOMI, RUTH *and* ORPAH.)

NAOMI: Lo, my daughters, yonder lies Bethlehem!

RUTH: Rest thee, my mother!

NAOMI (*sinking to straw*):

Aye, rest! Rest is sweet.
How soft the city lieth, cradled in her hills! So I have seen her in dreams.

ORPAH (*gazing*):

Goodly is the land of thy nativity, O my mother!
The hills are girdled with joy;
The valleys are yellow with corn;
They shout for joy; they also sing.

135-3

NAOMI:

Yet when Elimelech, my husband, bare me to Moab, the land was bare and desolate, and famine stalked the gray fields.
O Bethlehem, Bethlehem, wherefore did we forsake thee in thy sorrow?

ORPAH: O my mother, sorrow may endure for a season, but joy cometh in the morning.

NAOMI:

Nay, gladness is forever departed and joy is become a stranger, for Elimelech, my husband, is dead; my sons are dead also—and I, I am become a stranger to my people. (*She rises.*)
Now go your ways, my daughters, dearly beloved;
Return ye each unto your father's house.
And may the Lord deal kindly with you and grant you peace,
Even as ye have dealt with my sons and me.

ORPAH: Nay, but we will abide with thee, I and Ruth also.

NAOMI:

Ye are young.
Return to your own people and your own gods.
And may ye each find fitting rest within an husband's habitation!

ORPAH:

Must it be so?
I am loath to say "Farewell," but—as thou sayest,
It may be I shall find another husband.
Fare thee well, mother, and may the Lord God bless thee!
(*Embraces* NAOMI *and goes, weeping.*)

(NAOMI *and* RUTH *gaze after her.*)

NAOMI BIDS ORPAH FAREWELL

NAOMI:

Behold, thy sister-in-law hath obeyed me.
And returned to her own people and her own gods.
Do thou likewise!

RUTH (*Kneeling*):

Entreat me not to leave thee,
Nor to return from following after thee:
For whither thou goest, I will go;
And where thou lodgest I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God my God!

NAOMI (*tenderly*):

Listen to the voice of reason and attend unto her cry:
I am old, and when I die,
Thou wilt be left a stranger.
And very bitter is the bread of pity.

RUTH:

Where thou diest, will I die,
And there will I be buried! (*With outstretched arms.*)
The Lord do so to me,
And more also,
If aught but death part thee and me!

NAOMI: Dear one—

RUTH: I will not! (*Rises and squares her shoulders.*)

(*There is a pause, then* NAOMI *holds out her arms to* RUTH.)

NAOMI:

Now may the God of Israel bless thee,
And give thee peace!
Come, for my body is refreshed,
And my spirit mounteth on wings.

Come, for yonder lies Bethlehem,
And plenteousness is come again unto her.
Come, for the sun is sinking into the west,
And I hear the song of the reapers,
As they dance merrily homeward.

RUTH: Art thou truly glad to have me?

NAOMI:

Glad? My daughter!
Lo, now is the time of harvest of the barley,
And the feast of Ingathering.
And there be always gleanings in the fields
For the stranger and the widow.

RUTH:

Then will I go out into the fields;
I will glean of him in whose sight I shall find favor. (*They pick up their bundles.*)

(*Two children enter and draw near.*)

RUTH (*shyly*): Think you thy people will welcome me, who am a woman of Moab?

NAOMI: Who could be aught but kind to thee, O faithful?

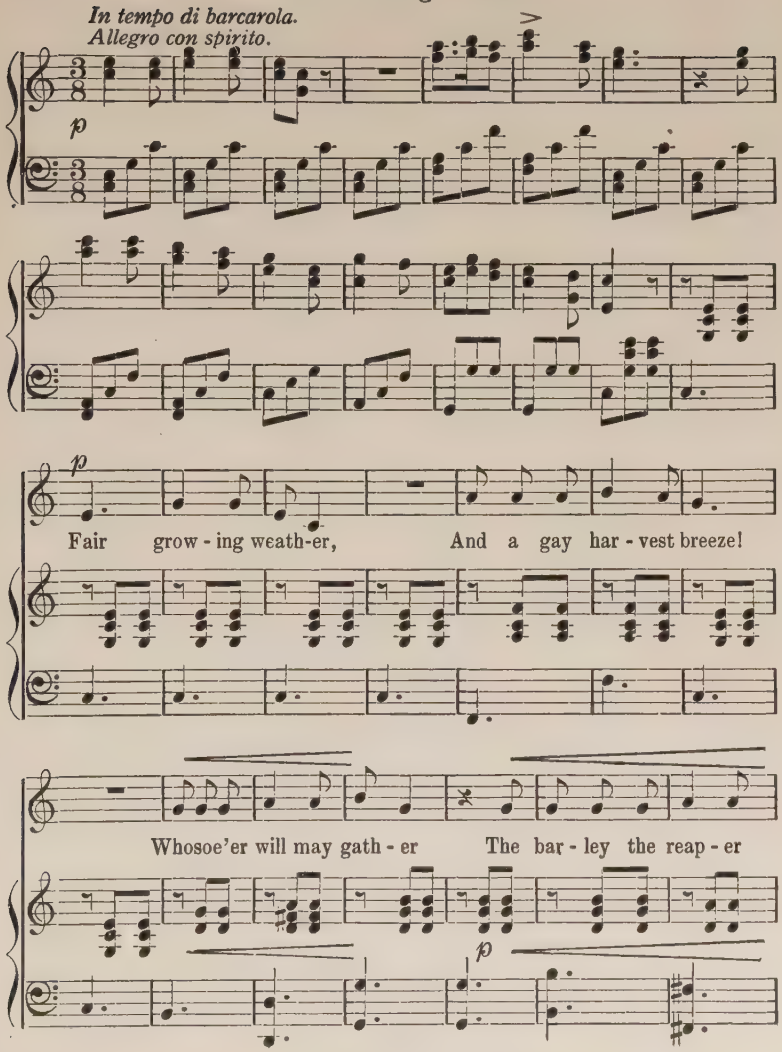
ZELOPHEHAD (*the* BOY): Lo, we will give thee welcome. (*To* GIRL) Mind thy manners!

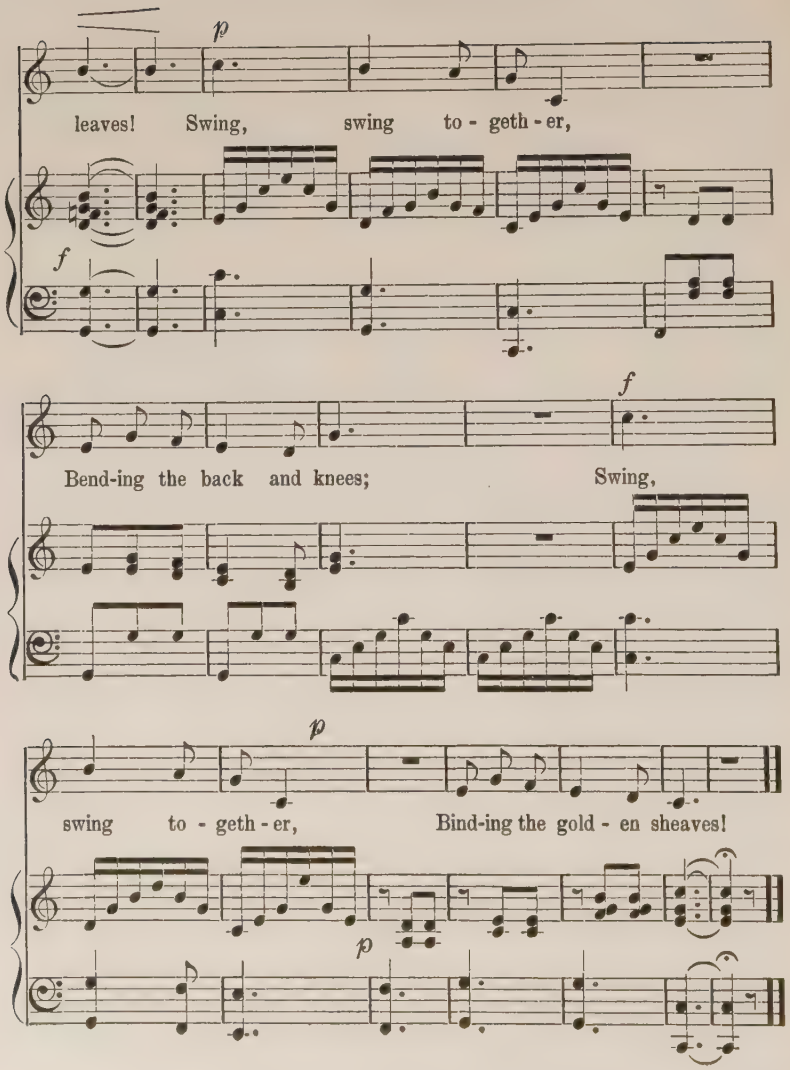
KETURAH (*the* GIRL): Have of my gathering! (*Offers poppies, or other flowers.*)

RUTH: 'Tis a fair greeting. Tell me your names.

ZELOPHEHAD: I am called, Zelophehad. Her name, 'tis of no import; she is but a girl. There come the reapers! Hola!

(*The* REAPERS *and others enter singing "Fair Growing Weather"*):

Fair Growing Weather

In tempo di barcarola.
Allegro con spirito.
p
p
Fair grow - ing weath-er, And a gay har - vest breeze!
Whosoe'er will may gath - er The bar - ley the reap - er
p

Fair Growing Weather—Concluded

HEAD REAPER: Ho, strangers, who are ye?

NAOMI: I am a woman of Israel.

REAPERS: The blessing of the God of Israel be upon you!

FIRST REAPER: What seek ye here in Bethlehem?

NAOMI: Is there among you one who remembers Naomi?

SECOND REAPER: Naomi? When I was a little, tiny lad Naomi went from Bethlehem. Art thou she?

(NAOMI *bows her head.*)

THIRD REAPER: I remember, comrades! We children called her then "The Pleasant One." Where is your husband? Where your sons?

NAOMI:

I have no child; neither have I any more an husband.
I went away full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.

HEAD REAPER: The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.

REAPERS: Blessed be the name of the Lord!

NAOMI: How can I say it? For the Lord dealeth very hardly with his servant. (RUTH *presses lovingly closer.*) Yet, God hath not utterly laid by his favor, for Ruth, my daughter, still abideth with me.

HEAD REAPER:

Thrice welcome art thou to thine old-time people!
Thrice welcome, stranger, to a land of plenty,
Where thou shalt eat bread without scarceness;
Thou shalt not lack anything in it.

(*The* BINDERS *and* GLEANERS, *women, turn away in sour fashion.*)

FIRST REAPER:

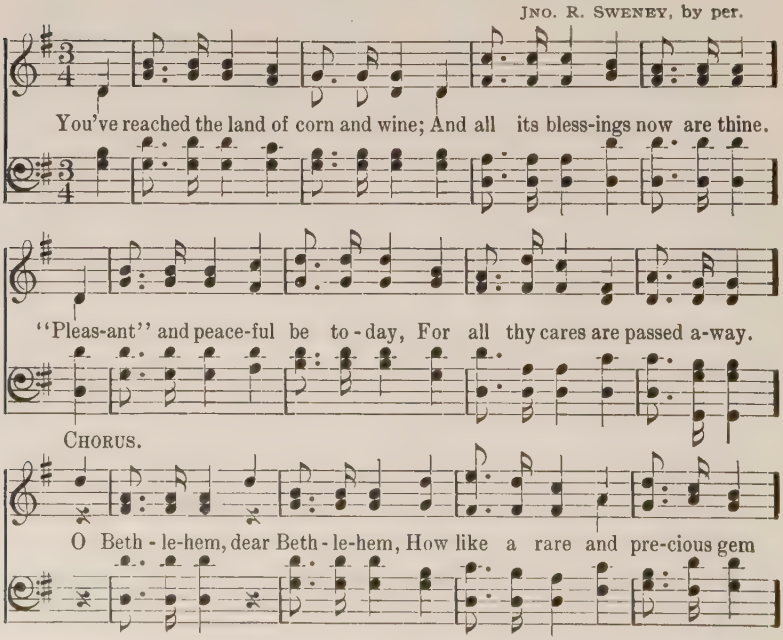
On now to Bethlehem! Come, O Naomi!
Truly the Lord hath taken away thy sons,
But he hath given thee a daughter.

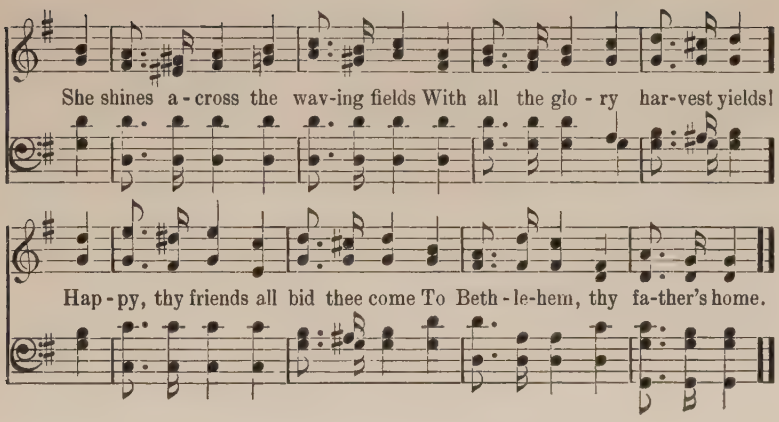
NAOMI: Blessed be the name of the Lord! (*She presses* RUTH *to her.*)

(*All pass out slowly, singing.*)

SONG (*Music: "Beulah Land"*):

O Bethlehem, Dear Bethlehem


JNO. R. SWENEY, by per.
You've reached the land of corn and wine; And all its bless-ings now are thine.
"Pleas-ant" and peace-ful be to-day, For all thy cares are passed a-way.
CHORUS.
O Beth-le-hem, dear Beth-le-hem, How like a rare and pre-cious gem


She shines a - cross the wav-ing fields With all the glo - ry har-vest yields!
Hap - py, thy friends all bid thee come To Beth - le-hem, thy fa-ther's home.

Act II. *The Fields of Boaz*

[*Enter* Boaz, Boy (*attendant*) *and* Head Reaper.]

Boaz: See'st thou the farther field? Put ye the sickle in yonder, for the harvest is ripe.

Head Reaper: Aye, aye, lord! Truly the harvest is plenteous, but the reapers are few, hard to come by and idle! And they demand each his penny a day! (*Holds up hands in disgust.*)

Boaz (*amused*): They must live.

Head Reaper: Pfui! And the women? Good-for-naughts, all of 'em!

Boaz: Be there many poor folk come to the gleaning?

Head Reaper: Ah, Lord Boaz, believe me, they do not idle. (*He speaks confidentially.*) Hark'ee, it is true the law commands we do not glean the corners of the field, but leave the grain for the needy; that's the law an' I'm not disputing

it. But I'm thinking thy servants leave too much for the gleaners and divide with 'em at nightfall. Aye, lord!

BOAZ: Lo, there is enough for all. I would not have a child of Israel to lack.

HEAD REAPER: Humph!

BOAZ: When that field is finished, follow to this field. I will observe the grain shall be ripe for the morrow. (*He goes.*)

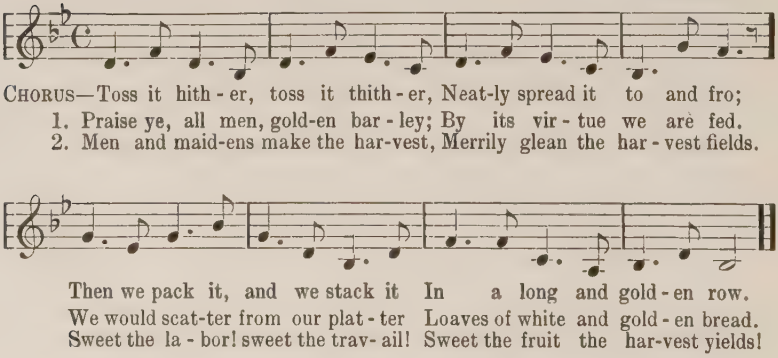
HEAD REAPER (*calls*): Halloa, ye reapers! Hither!

(*The* REAPERS, BINDERS *and* GLEANERS *enter singing and dancing. They circle about the corn-stack and bow low to the golden corn.* ZELOPHEHAD *and* KETURAH *follow.*)

SONG (*Music: Melody from some old opera, unknown*):

Toss it Hither

RUTH and BOAZ


CHORUS—Toss it hith - er, toss it thith - er, Neat-ly spread it to and fro;
1. Praise ye, all men, gold-en bar - ley; By its vir - tue we are fed.
2. Men and maid-ens make the har-vest, Merrily glean the har - vest fields.
Then we pack it, and we stack it In a long and gold - en row.
We would scat-ter from our plat - ter Loaves of white and gold - en bread.
Sweet the la - bor! sweet the trav- ail! Sweet the fruit the har-vest yields!

(*At the end of the song the men fling themselves on straw; the maids bring water.* RUTH *has followed, gleaning with the other gleaners. She stands shyly apart, striving to tie her bundle. The other women draw together casting hostile glances at her.*)

First Reaper (*sprawling on straw*) : Hai! The day is hot!

Head Reaper (*trying to rouse them*) : Come, the sun's near setting. Arouse ye! Get to your labors! Ye idle maidens, bind ye the sheaves!

Second Reaper (*lazily*) : Thou man of iron! Feelest thou no need for slumber?

(*The* Head Reaper *continues to urge in dumb show. Slowly the* Reapers *rise and join the group of maidens.* Zelophehad *and* Keturah *go to* Ruth.)

Zelophehad: I know thee; thou art the daughter of Naomi.

Keturah: See, we have gleaned these ears of corn for thee. (*They hand her corn.*)

Ruth: O ye dear ones! (*She embraces them.*)

Zelophehad: My heart goeth out in love to thee, O stranger. When I am grown, lo, I will wed with thee.

Ruth: I thank thee. May I grow in thy favor!

Boy (*attendant to* Boaz) : Art thou a worshiper of false gods?

Ruth: Nay, I serve the God of Israel.

First Gleaner (*in group*) : *Idolater!*

Second Gleaner (*in group*) : Shall a stranger take our gleanings?

Head Reaper: Peace, women, peace!

All the Women (Gleaners *and* Binders) : Get thee back to Moab, stranger and idolater! (*They advance threateningly toward* Ruth.)

Ruth (*with spirit*) : Idolater? I be none! I know the law of the God of Israel—better than ye. "And when ye reap the

harvest, thou shalt not wholly reap the borders of the field; thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the stranger."

BOY: Bravo, stranger! (*He turns mockingly to women.*) Hear, O Israel!

CRIES OF WOMEN: Moabitess!
Foreigner!
Stranger!

RUTH:
O sirs, is it sin? (*She holds out her arms to group.*)
I beseech you, as a stranger, be pitiful! Be courteous!

FIRST GLEANER (*stoops and gets clod of earth*): Stranger! Take thou the answer of Israel! (*She hurls clod at* RUTH.)

OTHER WOMEN (*doing likewise, cry*): Out upon thee! Moabitess! Idolater! Thief and robber!

(RUTH *shrinks before them, shielding herself with one arm.* BOAZ *enters the field.*)

BOAZ (*raising his hand in blessing*): The Lord be with you!

ALL (*bowing low*): The Lord bless thee, master!

BOAZ (*turning sharply to men*): Ho, men, what do ye?

THIRD REAPER (*sullenly*): 'Tis the women, lord; not we!

FIRST GLEANER: Lord, shall the Moabitess have all our gleanings?

SECOND GLEANER: We want no idolaters here in Bethlehem.

BOAZ: Peace, women! (*Beckons* HEAD REAPER.) Who is she, yonder?

HEAD REAPER: It is the Moabitess, Ruth, wed to Naomi's son, who died in Moab. She hath followed Naomi out of the land of Moab, for the love she beareth her. She said to me,

"I pray thee, let me glean after the reapers! Let me gather the crumbs from my lord's table."

FIRST GLEANER (*dragging* RUTH *forth and pointing to her gleanings*): Look, lord! Her crumbs are *loaves.*

BOAZ: O Israel, Israel, hearken to the law: "A stranger shall ye not wrong, neither oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

BOY (*gleefully*): "Love ye therefore the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

BOAZ:

Ho, stranger, hither!
I give thee welcome to Bethlehem, O daughter-in-law of Naomi!
Go not to glean in another field; but abide here fast by my maidens.
For the field is mine, and what I will to be done, is done.
And when thou art athirst, go to the vessels,
And drink of that which the young men have drawn.

RUTH (*prostrating herself*): O my lord, why have I found grace in thy sight, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am but a stranger?

BOAZ:

O my daughter,
I know the goodly deeds which thou hast done,
How thou hast left the land of thy nativity,
And art come to a strange land,
For the love thou bearest Naomi.
And may the God of Israel bless thee!
And may he cause his face to shine upon thee!
For under his wings wilt thou find refuge, O my daughter.

BOAZ: "GO NOT TO GLEAN IN ANOTHER FIELD, BUT ABIDE HERE FAST BY MY MAIDENS"

RUTH:

Let me find grace in thy sight,
For that thou hast comforted me greatly,
For that thou hast spoken kindly unto thine handmaid.

BOAZ:

Come hither now, and eat and be sufficed.
And dip thy morsel in the vinegar.

FIRST REAPER:

Have of the parched corn, stranger;
For it will strengthen thee and give thee comfort. (*Offers platter.*)

FIRST BINDER (*shyly*): Drink and be glad, for thou hast found friends among us. (They draw her aside with offers of friendliness.)

BOAZ (*to* HEAD REAPER): Let her glean among the barley and reproach her not when she gleaneth. Also pull out some from your bundles, that her lap may be full and her spirit glad, for I honor her faithfulness which is not equalled, yea, not among the daughters of Israel. (*He goes.*)

(*As they cut and bind the grain the* REAPERS *and others half chant, half recite the following*):

MEN:

The valleys are covered (*Low note.*)
With corn; it is golden.

MAIDENS:

The round moon is rising,
The moon of the harvest, (*High note.*)
So yellow and fruitful!

MEN:
The pastures are cloth-ed
With flocks; they speak plenty. (*Low note.*)

MAIDENS:
The harvest is whitening
Ripe for the sickle. (*High note.*)

MEN:
Sweep! goes the sickle!
The long stalks are falling. (*Low note.*)

MAIDENS: The maidens are binding. (*High note.*)

MEN: Ho for the harvest!
Ho for the harvest!

ALL: Ho!
Ho!
Ho! (*All pass out but* RUTH.)

(*Enter* NAOMI.)

NAOMI: Ai, my dear one, art thou not weary? Dost thou not hunger? Lo, thou hast toiled the livelong day in the sunshine, and art a stranger to the labor.

RUTH: Behold, my mother! (*She displays her gleanings.*) I have no hunger, neither am I thirsty; for I have received kindness from thy people.

NAOMI: Now blessed be he in whose eyes thou didst find favor! What was his name.

RUTH: They called him, "Boaz."

NAOMI: Boaz! Why, the man is one of our near kinsmen; and shall it not be well with thee, my daughter?

RUTH (*lovingly*): All *is* well, while I have thee, for all thy ways are pleasantness, and thy paths, peace!

NAOMI: Hearken: This night, belike, he will winnow barley upon the threshing floor. Now wash thee and anoint thee and get thee thither, and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.

RUTH (*shrinking*): Do thou tell me.

NAOMI: It is a custom, a custom of my people. Question not, but obey.

RUTH: I go, my mother. (*She passes out.*)

NAOMI (*crosses her arms on her bosom*): Now blessed be the Lord that hath not left me this day without a near kinsman! For he shall redeem the land of Elimelech, and shall raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, and again I shall be a mother in Israel! (*She goes after* RUTH.)

ACT III. *Late Sunset of the Same Day*

(*Enter* BOAZ *and the* BOY, *who carries a tray and goblet.*)

BOY (*eagerly*): O Lord, the fields to the north are harvested; only the western fields remain, and then the feast! Say, lord, when shall it be?

BOAZ (*calls*): Ohé, reaper! (HEAD REAPER *enters.*) Remember we winnow barley to-night upon the threshing floor.

HEAD REAPER: Thy servant remembers. (*Bows.*)
Farewell, master, and for thy kindness this day to the stranger, may the God of Israel bless thee! (*He goes.*)

BOAZ (*in a low voice*): I am blessed.

BOY (*impatiently*): Say, lord, when shall the feast be? After the wheat harvest?

BOAZ: (dreamily): She was as a field of pale wheat stirred by the south wind.

BOY: What, lord?

BOAZ: Fair as the moon! Pure as the sun!

BOY:

What is fair, lord?

As for me, I like best the vineyards with the sweet grapes. (*Smacks his lips.*)

BOAZ: Aye, she is like them. Didst see her as she stood there, fair as Rachel—

BOY: Oho! That is thy meaning! Speak less in riddles, lord.

BOAZ: And at a word of kindness, she melted as the snows upon Mount Carmel.

BOY: Oho! Yea, as thou sayest, she is well enough to look on—

BOAZ (*sternly*): Thou speakest too freely. I have indulged thee; leave me!

BOY (*coaxingly*): Dear master, do thou rest here until the winnowing. See, I will throw this robe upon the straw, and fetch thy supper to thee. Eh, lord? (*He looks pleadingly at* BOAZ; *then he poses.*) I like her hair.

"Her hair is like a flock of goats
That lie along the side of Mount Gilead.
Her teeth are like a flock of ewes that are newly shorn,
Which are come up from the washing."

(*He breaks off and regards* BOAZ *uncertainly.*)

BOAZ (*throws himself on straw*): Go, go!

BOY: Here is the drink, lord; I will bring cake and honey. (*He serves* BOAZ *and goes.*)

(BOAZ *holds goblet before him, then drains it slowly, tosses it from him and sleeps.*)

(RUTH *enters timidly. She is clad in white and is veiled. She sees* BOAZ, *hesitates, then kneels before him.*)

DANCE

(BOAZ *wakes, raises himself on one elbow and sees* RUTH.)

BOAZ: Who art thou?

RUTH (*dropping her veil*): I am Ruth, thine handmaid.

BOAZ (*rising slowly*): Thou!

RUTH (*still kneeling*): Naomi bade me come to thee and say: "Thou art a near kinsman; spread thou therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid."

BOAZ: Knowest thou what thou askest?

RUTH: O lord, I am a stranger to thy customs, and friendless save for thee. I pray thee, let me be as one of thine handmaidens.

BOAZ: Blessed art thou that thou hast not sought the young men, be they poor or rich; neither hast thou showed kindness to another. Kneel not to me, for am I not thy kinsman? (*Raises her.*)

RUTH (*with a little helpless gesture*): But if I may not kneel, what shall I do—

BOAZ: Do—nothing. It is mine to do. It is true I am a near kinsman; but there is one yet nearer. If he act the part of kinsman to thee, it is his right; I can say nothing. But if he do not, then will I!

RUTH (*faltering*): Thou art gracious.

BOAZ: I will seek the man straightway; and in the meantime—(*He looks for* BOY *who appears carrying a basket of grapes and a plate of cakes. He signs to* RUTH *to hold out her veil; she shrinks back with deprecating gesture. He forces them into her arms*)—go not empty unto Naomi, but say unto her, "I will not rest till all is well with thee." Farewell!

(RUTH *bows and passes out.* BOAZ *watches her, then strides away. The* BOY *looks after each in turn, shrugs, picks up rug and goblet, and goes off whistling.*)

ACT IV. *Outside the Gates of the City*

(*The following morning. Enter* BOAZ *and* BOY *from one side, and* FIRST KINSMAN *from opposite side.*)

BOAZ: Ha! the man I seek, seeketh me. Ho, kinsman, turn aside and we will take counsel together. (*To* BOY.) Go thou and bring the elders of the city. (BOY *goes.*)

FIRST KINSMAN: Knowest thou Naomi is come again to the parcel of land which was our brother Elimelech's?

BOAZ: 'Twas for that I sought thee. Thou knowest the land may not be held of a woman. Therefore if thou wilt redeem the land, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem the land, then tell me; for there is none to redeem it beside thee, and I am after thee.

FIRST KINSMAN (*purses up his lips in reflection, then nods slowly*): I will redeem the land.

BOAZ: Thou wilt redeem it? (*After a pause of disappointment he speaks.*) What day thou buyest the land at the hand of Naomi, that day must thou wed with Ruth, her daughter-in-law, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

FIRST KINSMAN: So? Indeed, then, I cannot redeem it, lest I should mar mine own inheritance.

(*The* BOY *enters, followed by* ELDERS *of city.*)

ELDERS: The Lord be with you!

BOAZ: And with you also! Will ye do me kindness? Sit ye all down, for I have business with you. (*To* BOY) Go call

Naomi and her daughter also. (Boy *goes. All seat themselves in a circle with* Boaz *in center.*)

Let one make known the law in Israel concerning redeeming and changing of land.

First Elder: For to confirm all things, the man who sells, he must draw off his shoe and give it to his neighbor.

First Kinsman (*draws off shoe and gives to* Boaz): Be ye my witnesses: I sell to thee my right unto the land of Naomi; buy it for thyself.

Boaz: Ye are witnesses this day that I have bought all the land that was Elimelech's at the hand of Naomi. Moreover I have purchased Ruth, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

Elders (*raising right hand*): We are thy witnesses.

(*In the distance is heard the harvest song: "Toss it hither." The* Reapers *and* Women *enter singing.* Boaz *raises his hand and they silence. The* Boy *enters with* Ruth *and* Naomi. Boaz *advances to* Ruth.)

Boaz:

Ruth, I have claimed thee by the right of kinship,
According to the ancient Hebrew custom.
My love for thee is made known before all men.
Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair!
No more shalt thou follow after the reapers,
Neither shalt thou hunger any more or thirst any more.
Come thou. (*He leads her to altar.*)
The feast of the Ingathering approacheth
When the Children of Israel are glad,
Yea, when they bring an offering of thanksgiving,

SONG OF PRAISE FOR THE HARVEST

And leave it upon the Lord's altar.
Tell me, what hast thou gleaned in the fields of Boaz?

RUTH: Lord, an omer of barley.

BOAZ:

Ho, bring hither to me an omer of barley. (HEAD REAPER *goes.*)
I will offer it to the God of Israel
For a thank-offering—

FIRST ELDER: Not so! Let the woman offer it, for it is writ: "If a stranger sojourn with thee and will offer an offering made by fire, it shall be of a sweet savor to the Lord."

ALL THE ELDERS: Aye, let the woman take it, and offer to the God of Israel.

(*The* HEAD REAPER *brings barley to* BOAZ. *He gives it to* RUTH *and she lays it upon the altar. The* BOY *brings a light;* RUTH *fires the grain. All gather about the altar and sing. The music is the music of "Toss it hither," but it is slow and even.*

God of harvest, Lord of grainfields,
Sweet to thee the ripening corn!
Take the first-fruits, God of Israel,
As our sacrifice this morn.

ELDERS:

The Lord—make the woman—who is come—unto thy house—
Like Rachel—and Leah—
Which two—did built the house of Israel.
And do thou worthily—in Ephratah—
And be famous—in Bethlehem!
And thou—Bethlehem Ephratah—

THE SACRIFICIAL OFFERING

Though thou be least—among the thousands of Judah—
Yet out of thee—shall he come forth—
Who shall be—*ruler*—in Israel!

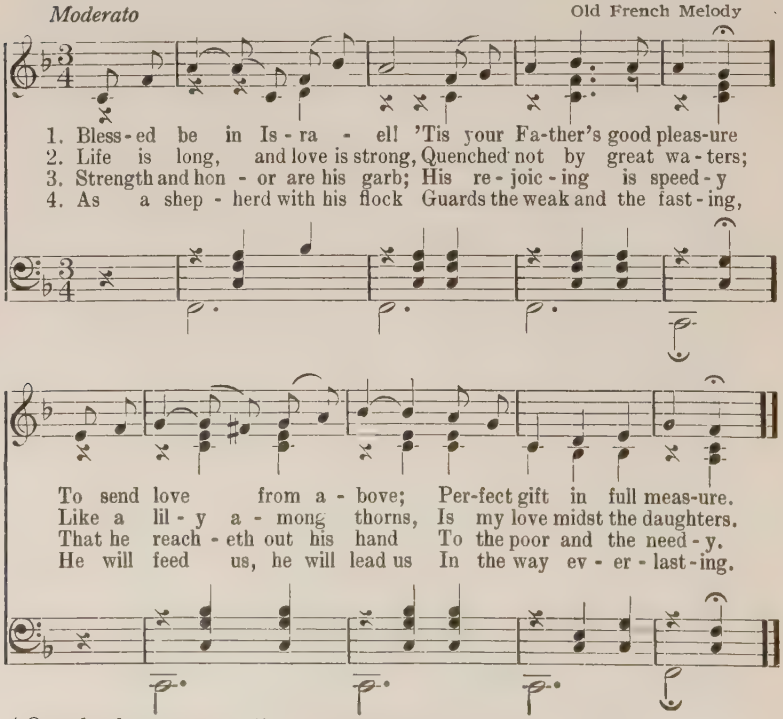
BOAZ: Come, my beloved!

(RUTH *kneels before* NAOMI: NAOMI *blesses her with hands resting on her head.*)

BOAZ: Come! (*He leads* RUTH *away.*)

SONG (*Music, an unknown French melody*):

Blessed Be


Moderato
Old French Melody
1. Bless-ed be in Is-ra-el! 'Tis your Fa-ther's good pleas-ure
2. Life is long, and love is strong, Quenched not by great wa-ters;
3. Strength and hon-or are his garb; His re-joic-ing is speed-y
4. As a shep-herd with his flock Guards the weak and the fast-ing,
To send love from a-bove; Per-fect gift in full meas-ure.
Like a lil-y a-mong thorns, Is my love midst the daughters.
That he reach-eth out his hand To the poor and the need-y.
He will feed us, he will lead us In the way ev-er-last-ing.

(*On the last verse all follow* RUTH *and* BOAZ *out.*)

ESTHER

THE PEOPLE

King Ahasuerus.

Princes of Babylon:
- Bigtha
- Teresh
- Memucan
- Abagtha
- Zethar
- Haman

Mordecai, a Jew.

Esther, his niece.

Trumpeter.

Scribe.

Kisrinni, niece to Haman.

Page to the King.

Page to the Queen.

Two Slaves (women).

Four Soldiers.

Maidens.

Jews.

THE PLACE

If the play is given out of doors, place a seat or couch at the back toward the right, with a table in front of it. Around table arrange six other couches.

If the play is given in doors, the palace scene or banqueting room may be simply a deep blue back-drop for sky. An improvement on this is as follows: Several feet in front of the back-drop build a wall. (See description in Act I of Burning Fiery Furnace.) Throw a strong blue light against back-drop. In front of the wall arrange a low table with seven couches. When the couches are on stage it is an interior. When the slaves remove six of these couches, leaving only one, the scene is supposed to be in front of the palace.

THE PROPERTIES

Golden scepter.
A trumpet.
A table, preferably on trestles.
Seven couches, or, one seat and six couches.
Gilt goblets. (Use Vernis-Martin gold.)
Pitchers.
Fruits.
A crown to crown queen.
A litter, if possible.
A robe and chain for slave to bring Mordecai.
A ring for king.
A tablet of clay and wooden stylus for scribe.
A chess board.
Three crowns of roses.
A rope to bind Mordecai.
Swords for princes.
Spears for soldiers.
Parchment from which trumpeter reads.

SUGGESTIONS AS TO COSTUMES.

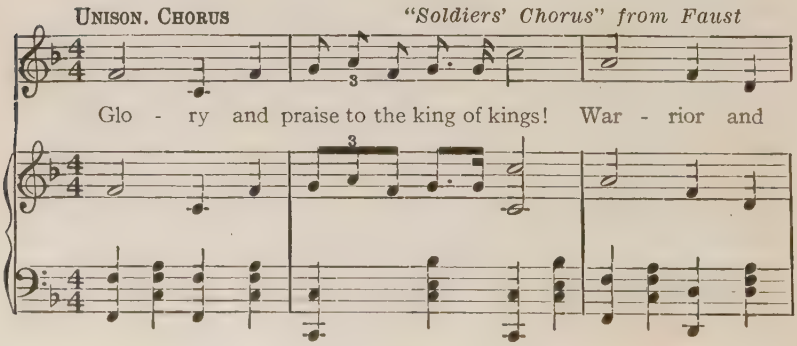
Clothe the Jews in black and white, the maidens in pale delicate draperies with veils over faces when they enter, the Babylonians in brilliant colors.

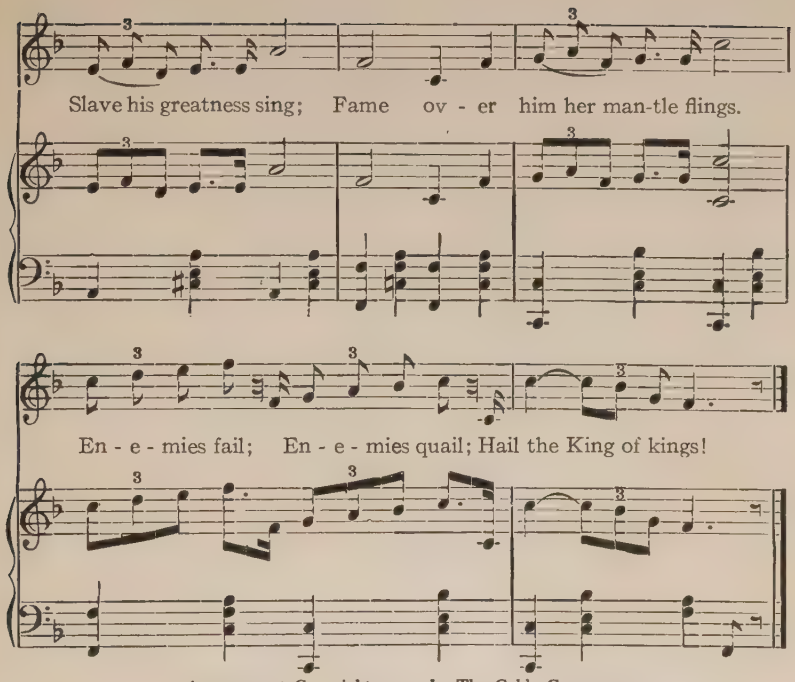
ESTHER PLEADS BEFORE THE KING

ESTHER

(*The* SLAVES *enter and set the table with baskets of golden fruit and purple grapes, also goblets. They pile the couches with brilliant pillows. Then they take position, one on each side of the board, holding their gilded pitchers on their shoulders.*)

(*The* TRUMPETER *enters blowing upon his trumpet, and takes his position at right, toward the front. The* SOLDIERS *follow immediately after in double file and form a little squad at the left, facing the* TRUMPETER. *They raise their spears in salute as the* KING *enters. The six* PRINCES *follow, marching by twos with swords drawn. As they enter they separate slightly and make an arch with their crossed swords under which the* KING *enters. He is attended by a small* PAGE *bearing a fan, which may be painted with Assyrian designs, if desired. As the* PRINCES *enter all sing.*)





Arrangement Copyright, 1911, by The Cable Company

KING (*saluting by raising scepter*) : Princes, be seated. (*All sit at table, the* KING *at back.*)

(SLAVES *fill goblets.*)

TERESH (*springing to his feet*) : O King Ahasuerus, live forever! I drink to thy long life and great prosperity.

ALL (*rising and clinking glasses*) : O King Ahasuerus, O king, live forever!

KING: Princes, I thank you. (*All sit.*) And now ere the seven day feast be ended, I bid you drink to the queen, to the most godlike of women, Queen Vashti.

ALL (*rising and clinking glasses again*): The queen! The queen!

TERESH: As I have heard—most beautiful of women.

MEMUCAN: Yea, the most heavenly.

BIGTHA: Rumor doth say—(*he pauses maliciously*)—the king so veils the queen as though she had lost her beauty.

KING (*furiously*): What? Do men dare—? (*Claps.* SLAVES *bow low.*) Go, seek thy mistress. Bid Queen Vashti put on her fairest robes and come before me. (SLAVES *go.*) Ye shall be judge, O princes, that she is the most beautiful of women. Once shall ye look, then lower ye your eyes so that her modesty be not offended.

ABAGTHA: The king honors us greatly.

BIGTHA: If the queen come—

KING: *If?*

BIGTHA: I mean to say *when* the queen comes, obeying her lord's command, even if she be not fair as rumor saith, I yet shall hold her fair in wifely obedience.

ALL: Yea. Even so.

(*The* SLAVES *reenter; they are trembling and shrink away.*)

SLAVE: O king—O king—

KING: Speak, slave!

SLAVE: O king, the noble queen, Queen Vashti, lord—

KING: Well, fool?

SLAVE: She will not come.

KING: What! *Will* not?

SLAVE: She saith she'll not unveil for such as these, lest the king blush for her.

(BIGTHA *laughs, a low malicious laugh.*)

KING (*furiously*): Begone! (SLAVE *goes.*) Tell me, lords, tell me what shall be done to her who disobeys the bidding of the king?

ZETHAR: No punishment is great enough for her who disobeys the bidding of the king.

ABAGTHA: Ai, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but to all men; for when the women shall hear of this deed, that the king commanded the queen to be brought before him, but she came not, then will they grow bold in disobedience. Wives will withstand their husbands, girls their fathers.

HAMAN: If it please the king, let Queen Vashti be put away, and let the king choose another that is better than she. Let fair young virgins be brought before the king that he may choose. (*Reflectively.*) My sister's child is fair—

MEMUCAN: So shall she be a warning to all women.

KING: It shall be done. (*He rises.*) Come, lords, and I will send forth my decree. For men must rule their households, and women must be kept in subjection.

PRINCES (*repeat*): Yea, women must be kept in subjection.

TERESH: O prince of wisdom!

(*All pass out save the* SLAVES. *They laugh.*)

FIRST SLAVE: Wisdom!!!

SECOND SLAVE: Wisdom???

(*The* SLAVES *remove table and six couches.*)

(*The* TRUMPETER *enters and blows.* PEOPLE, SLAVES, SOLDIERS, *assemble, among them* MORDECAI *and* ESTHER.)

TRUMPETER: Hearken, O people! The decree of the most high and noble king, Ahasuerus, unto his people: It is the will of the king to choose him a wife from the virgins of Persia.

Therefore this day let all the fair young virgins assemble at the palace of Shushan! The king will choose that one who finds most favor in his eyes.

Hear and obey, O ye people of Persia! (TRUMPETER *goes.*)

(*The people disperse.* ESTHER *and* MORDECAI *remain.*)

MORDECAI: Hearest thou, Esther?

ESTHER: Yea, my lord and father!

MORDECAI: Then get thee gone and make thee ready, child.

ESTHER: O father, no!

MORDECAI (*sternly*): Wilt thou say me, no? Thou whom I have reared as mine own child?

ESTHER: But, my father, we are Jews. Our people abide here in captivity. Give me not to the king who enslaves our people.

MORDECAI: Hear ye, my daughter: Because thou art a Jewess, it is well. Should the king choose thee, thou may'st aid thy people.

ESTHER: I? My spirit is willing but my heart is faint.

MORDECAI: Not thy strength but God's shall give deliverance. If through *thee*, happy art thou! (ESTHER *looks rebellious.*)

Go and make ready. (ESTHER *turns reluctantly.*) But, Esther, hark'ee, tell no one that thou art a daughter of Israel.

ESTHER (*defiantly*): Why should I conceal what I delight in?

MORDECAI: Because I tell thee. Go! (ESTHER *goes meekly.* MORDECAI *looks after her with admiration.*) She will find favor in the eyes of the king, for she is beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem. (*He hears a sound, creeps to one side and listens.*)

(*Enter the conspirators,* TERESH *and* BIGTHA. *They look this way and that way and see no one.*)

TERESH: Look you, the time is ripe this very night to slay the king.

BIGTHA: Aye, when he leaves his chamber, be you ready.

TERESH: Hush! He comes yonder! (*They stand to one side.*)

(*Trumpets. Enter the* JEWS *and other people in front. Enter* AHASUERUS, *his* PAGE, *his* PRINCES, *and* GUARDS *at back.*)

PEOPLE: Hail! Hail! Ahasuerus, hail!

TERESH *and* BIGTHA: O king, live forever!

KING: Give you greeting, lords! Ye are here early.

HAMAN: Yonder the maidens come! (*He points.*)

KING: They sway as a garden of lilies in the springtime.

(*The procession of* MAIDENS *enters, possibly winding its way through audience. They are closely veiled.*)

HAMAN: O king, the maid who first approacheth, observe her

closely, I pray thee. She is my sister's daughter. Fair as the moon!

KING: Approach! Fear nothing.

KISRINNI: My lord, do I find favor in thy sight? (*She unveils boldly.*)

KING: Thy lips are as a thread of scarlet; also thy hair is comely. (HAMAN *and* KISRINNI *swell with delight.*) Go and await my pleasure. (KISRINNI *steps aside. To* SECOND MAID.) Damsel, come hither! Thine eyes are as a dove's behind thy veil. (*She unveils.*) Thy face is beautiful, but —go!

THIRD MAID: O king, I am the fairest of my father's house. I can sing a song and dance for thy good pleasure. (*She dances a few steps; he waves her away.*)

FOURTH MAID (*advances*): O king, be gracious to me; look upon me with favor!

KING: Sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance comely. Sing unto me that I may judge thy music.

(FOURTH MAID *sings. Possibly an East Indian love song, or "Invocation to the Sun-god," by Carlos Troyer.* [*10 bars.*]).

KING (*waves* FOURTH MAID *away, beckons* FIFTH. *He examines her, then shakes his head*): Thou wouldest not make me such a queen as Vashti! (*Turns to* SIXTH.)

Thy hair is like a shower of gold; thy skin like the rose and the lily! Let me see thy countenance.

ESTHER: My lord—my lord—

KING: Unveil!

ESTHER: Lord, I would ask a kindness of the king.

KING: Speak!

ESTHER: If I find favor in thy sight, O lord, seek to know nothing of my place or people.

KING: I swear! Unveil!

(ESTHER *unveils.*)

KING: Thou art fair—fairer than Vashti!

HAMAN (*advances*): O king, the maidens all await thy choice. (*Points to those who had gone before and those who follow after.*)

KING (*without taking his eyes from* ESTHER): 'Tis made!

HAMAN: O king, wilt thou so treat my sister's child? Look on her once again. (*Beckons* KISRINNI.) She is as fair—and she hides not *her* kindred.

KING: Lord Haman, she shall be handmaid to the queen.

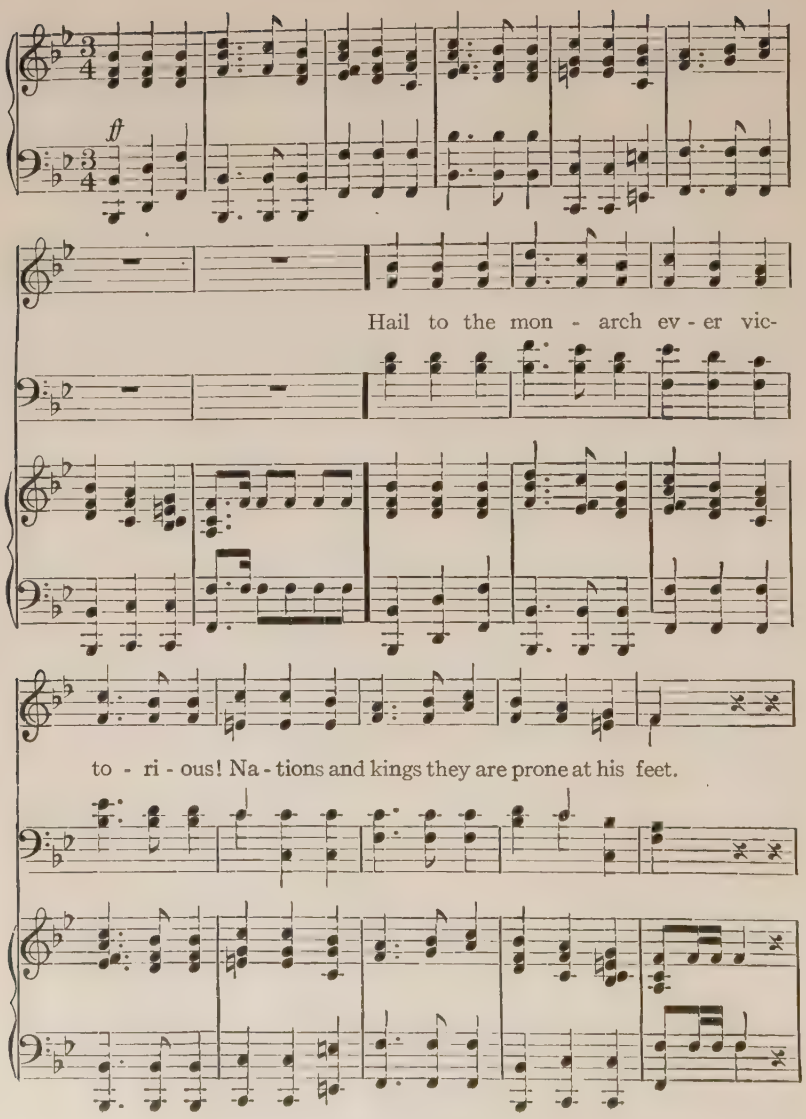
KISRINNI: I! *Her* handmaid?

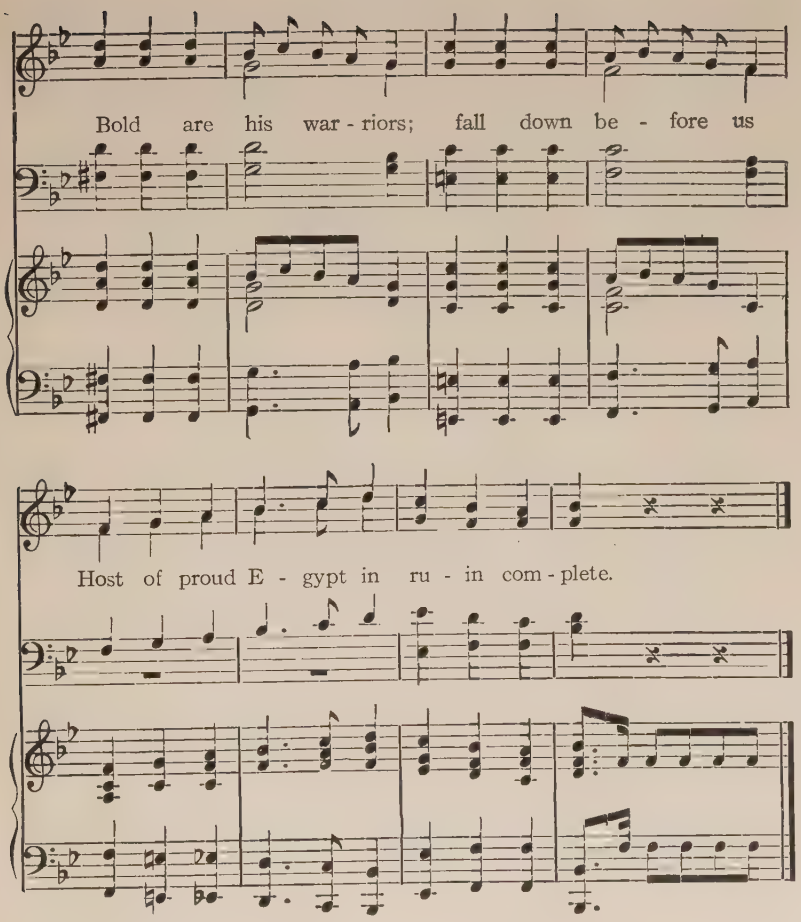
KING (*sternly*): Yea! (*He turns to speak to his page, who presently slips out.*)

HAMAN (*secretly to* ESTHER): I shall find out thy kindred and thy people, and thou and they shall suffer. (*He turns to console* KISRINNI.)

MORDECAI (*advances cautiously to* ESTHER): Hist, Esther, see'st thou yon two princes, Teresh and Bigtha? They plot against the king to take his life. Accuse them boldly. (*He steps back.*)

(*During the above* HAMAN *has watched* ESTHER *closely. The* KING *now advances to her, holding the crown which the* PAGE *has brought.* KISRINNI *removes* ESTHER'S *veil.* ESTHER *kneels and the* KING *crowns her.*)

TRUMPETS: Song: "Hail to the Monarch." Cantata of Esther by Bradbury.

ff
Hail to the mon - arch ev - er vic-
to - ri - ous! Na - tions and kings they are prone at his feet.



KING: Rise up, O queen!

ESTHER: My lord, am I chosen queen of thy household?

KING: Yea.

ESTHER: My lord, is my word to have weight in thy judgments?

KING (*amused*): Thy word? A woman's word? Yea, *thy* word shall have weight.

ESTHER (*rising and pointing at traitors*): Then I accuse yon princes, Teresh and Bigtha; for they have sought thy life, to kill thee ere to-morrow's dawn. I, thy queen, accuse them!

TERESH: A lie! A lie!

BIGTHA: Believe her not, O king!

TERESH: 'Tis a base slave!

TERESH and BIGTHA (*grovelling*): Lord! Lord!

ESTHER: Look on their faces, lord, and judge!

KING: Lo, they have judged themselves. Guards, seize them! (*Struggle.*) Take them away and let them straight be hanged, a warning to traitors, on the city gates. (GUARDS *drag* TERESH *and* BIGTHA *out.*)

Haman, because thou thinkest thyself slighted, in that I favored not thy sister's daughter, I will raise thee in place of these traitors; I make thee the prince over my people. (*Gives him a ring.*)

Esther, thou hast found favor in my sight; arise and come away to the gardens of the king.

(MUSIC. *All pass slowly out save the* JEWS.)

MORDECAI (*to others*): Rejoice, ye sons of Israel, for the days of our captivity are nigh ended.

A JEW: How so, O Mordecai?

MORDECAI: Be secret: The new queen is of our people. She

will cause the king to look on us with kindness. Raise to the king and queen the Song of Songs.

PEOPLE (*sing or recite*): Rise up, my dove, my fair one, and come away! For lo, the winter is past and the rains are over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth and the time of the singing birds is come.

(*As they sing, enter* HAMAN *with* TRUMPETER *and* GUARDS.)

HAMAN: Make known the king's decree.

TRUMPETER (*blows*):

Be it known this day,
The decree of King Ahasuerus to the people of Persia:
I have raised Haman to the highest seat in my kingdom,
And made him a prince over my people.
Therefore bow down before him and do him reverence.
Hear ye the words of King Ahasuerus! (*Blows.*)

A JEW: Is Haman then to be to us as God?

ANOTHER JEW: Bow thou thy stubborn neck, for 'tis the king's decree.

(*The trumpet blows. All bow save* MORDECAI.)

HAMAN: How, fellow? Dost thou yield no obedience to the king?

MORDECAI: I bow my knee in worship to the Lord, and to him only.

HAMAN: Who art thou?

MORDECAI: Mordecai, a Jew!

HAMAN: A Jew? Ah! And 'twas thou I saw address the queen—she who hides her kindred. (*He adds two and two together.*) Queen Esther is a Jewess—is she? Say! (MORDECAI *is silent.*) I tell thee, not thy life only shall pay; the

queen, thy people shall suffer through thy act. Yonder the king approacheth and the king shall grant me my petition. Guards, clear the way!

(*The* SOLDIERS *force the* JEWS *away, as the* KING *enters from the left.*)

HAMAN (*bowing low*): A boon, O mighty King Ahasuerus!

KING: What would'st thou?

HAMAN: O king, you have raised me to honor; shall your people be suffered to despise me?

KING: Who dares despise thee?

HAMAN: One stands without—a leader of rebellion! I ask that both he and his people suffer—

KING: Most noble Haman, I trust thee. Go and deal with this people as thou wilt, and then return.

HAMAN: Most High, thy servant thanks thee.

(*The* KING *passes out back.*)

HAMAN: Ho, Trumpeter, read ye this, in the name of King Ahasuerus. (*He scribbles rapidly as people assemble.*)

(TRUMPETER *blows:* PEOPLE *assemble.*)

TRUMPETER:

Be it known this day,
The decree of King Ahasuerus to his people:
There is a people hateful to the king,
The Jews, a captive people,
Who reverence not our gods.
Therefore, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month,
Ye shall slay this people.
Spare neither man nor maid,
Nor babe in his mother's bosom.

So shall ye gain favor in the eyes of the king.
Given by order of Haman, Lord High Chamberlain!

(*Trumpet.* HAMAN, TRUMPETER *and* GUARDS *go.*)

JEWS: Woe, woe, woe to our miserable people!

(*The* JEWS *disperse gloomily.* MORDECAI *remains lamenting.*)

MORDECAI: "O Lord, Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest it was neither in contempt nor pride, that I did not bow down to proud Haman.

"For I could have been content for the salvation of Israel, to kiss the soles of his feet!

"But I did this that I might not prefer the glory of man above the glory of God. Neither will I worship any but thee!

"O God, spare thy people!" (*Apocrypha.*)

(ESTHER *enters cautiously. She is wrapped in dark garments.*)

ESTHER: Hist, O my father! Wherefore dost thou cry so grievously?

MORDECAI: Woe be to Israel!

ESTHER:
My maidens brought me word that thou didst fill the air with lamentations.
I pray thee, share thy cup of sorrow with me.

MORDECAI: The decree of the wicked Haman is gone forth. Because I would not bow down nor worship him, he will slay our people. Man and maid and babe, he will spare none.

ESTHER: My father, I will come—die with my people.

MORDECAI: Nay, my daughter, the king will surely spare *thee.*

ESTHER:

An' if he slay my people, he slays me.
Fear not, O my father, the Lord will give deliverance.

MORDECAI (*slowly*):

Thou sayest well!
He hath caused the king to look on thee with favor; and thou shalt be the saviour of thy people.

ESTHER: I?

MORDECAI:

Thou!
Thou shalt go before the king and ask for mercy.

ESTHER: But that means—death!

MORDECAI: Death?

ESTHER: All the king's servants do know that whosoever shall come unto the king, who is not called, there is one law for him, that he be put to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live.
And *I* have not been sent for.

MORDECAI: Think not of thyself. Only be thou strong and very courageous.

ESTHER: But I am *not* strong; and my courage—it flees before a mouse.

MORDECAI (*brushing aside her flippancy*): Think of thy people!

ESTHER:

My people? (*She draws a long breath.*)
Go and gather together all the Jews, and fast ye for me and pray, while I go in unto the king.
And if I perish, I perish! Go, do my bidding. (*He goes;*

she crouches down weeping bitterly . Then suddenly she rises and extends her arms in prayer.)

I will trust in the Lord, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. (*She thinks a moment; then her face lights. She claps.*)

(KISRINNI *enters.*)

ESTHER: Bring here to me the man who keeps the kingdom's records.

KISRINNI: Most gracious, I obey. (*Bows and goes.*)

ESTHER (*as though to strengthen herself*): The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

(KISRINNI *reenters with* SCRIBE.)

ESTHER: Come hither. Read thou to me the words which thou hast writ concerning the traitors Teresh and Bigtha.

SCRIBE (*unfolds tablet*): Most High, thus it is writ: In the tenth month of the reign of Ahasuerus, two traitors, Teresh and Bigtha, sought his life. This wicked plot was discovered by the queen; and so were the traitors hanged.

ESTHER: 'Tis ill-writ! Thou hast omitted much. Thou hast not said how I, a maid, knew of the plot.

SCRIBE: Lady, how should this slave know?

ESTHER: Write: This wicked plot was discovered by Mordecai, a Jew, who overheard the traitors what they planned, and who is loyal servant to the king. He told the queen, and so were the traitors hanged.

SCRIBE: O Queen, as thou biddest! (*Kneels in corner and writes.*)

ESTHER: Be ready within call. (*She goes.*)

Enter HAMAN *and four* GUARDS. KISRINNI, *who was about to follow* ESTHER, *advances quickly to* HAMAN.)

KISRINNI: Beware the queen and MORDECAI the JEW! (*Hastens away.*)

HAMAN: Wait! Wait!

KISRINNI: I dare not. Beware of Mordecai; have him put away. (*Exit.*)

(*Here may be sung the song:* "Israel! O Israel!" *from cantata of* ESTHER, *by* MORDECAI *and the* JEWS *as they slowly enter. Or they may enter on the following lines.*)

(*Enter* MORDECAI *and* JEWS. *They lament.*)

MORDECAI *and* JEWS: O Lord, pity thy people! O Lord, hear us when we cry unto thee!

HAMAN: Dog of a Jew! Thou prayest thy God in vain.

MORDECAI: My God will answer when thy gods are dumb.

HAMAN:

Seize him! (GUARDS *do so.*)
The King's *my* god, and he will answer. (*He waves them away. One* GUARD *goes out with* MORDECAI *followed by lamenting* JEWS.)

(HAMAN *is following when the king's* PAGE *runs in.*)

PAGE (*calls*): Lord Haman! Lord Haman, I say, attend! The king desireth thee to play a game of chess.

HAMAN (*wrathfully*): Pah! I'm busy.

PAGE (*dragging at him*): I was sent to fetch thee.

(*Enter the* KING, *followed by* SLAVES *bringing two couches which they set facing each other.* SLAVES *go.*)

KING: What's this?

A PAGE

PAGE: I'm bringing him, O King. (*He jerks at* HAMAN, *who falls on his knees.*)

KING (*laughing*): Another boon? Haman, thou art a man the king delights in, but thou hast a crafty tongue. What would'st thou now?

HAMAN (*in an injured voice*): Thy servant desires only the glory of thy kingdom.

KING: It may be.

HAMAN: O king, thy decree is gone forth against the wicked people, that they die; but there is one among them—I marked his face when the traitors Teresh and Bigtha were discovered. I am convinced, O king, he was of their plot. I pray thee let him straight be hanged!

KING (*claps*): Men, obey the words of the Lord Haman.

HAMAN: Let a gallows be built fifty cubits high, and hang the man I gave to you. (GUARDS *salute and turn away.*)

KING: Wait, men! What were the cries I heard but now?

GUARD: O king, the Jews wail over the decree of the Lord Haman. (*Goes.*)

KING (*troubled*): It is the *Jews* thou hast condemned to death?

HAMAN: Yea, lord, they worship thee not nor obey thee.

KING: Well—I trust thee. Thou lovest me?

HAMAN: O king, I worship thee.

KING: Come then, a game! (*He sits and arranges chess men; they play.*)

(PAGE *goes on all fours between them and acts as table.*)

LOUD VOICES OF SLAVES (*without*): Hast thou the king's command: Thou canst not enter!

KING: Ah, gods! Who cometh? Shall I have no peace? Am I the king? And shall one dare come into my presence and I not send for him?

HAMAN: Maybe some friend of the traitor! (*Rises eagerly.*) I will give command, who cometh yonder he shall die.

KING: But stay! Discover first to me who dares to come without my bidding.

VOICE OF SLAVE (*outside*): Thou canst not enter, I say, without the king's command.

HAMAN (*with a deeply shocked countenance*): O my lord, my lord, it is the queen who acts thus boldly.

KING: The *queen?*

HAMAN: She merits death, my lord!

(ESTHER *enters followed by* PAGE *bearing fan. She is royally attired. The two remaining* GUARDS *drop their spears to forbid entrance.*)

KING: Death? Death? (ESTHER *holds out her hands in supplication.*)
Death, Lord Haman?
Nay, what is bold in thee and thine is meet and pleasing in the queen. (*To* HAMAN.) Get thee gone! (HAMAN *goes.*)
Advance, Queen Esther! (*He holds out golden scepter.* GUARDS *drop their spears.* ESTHER *advances.*)
What wilt thou, O my queen, what is thy request?

ESTHER: Dear my lord, if it seem good unto the king, let the

king and Haman come this hour to the banquet I have prepared, and there will I make my petition.

KING: Yea, we will come, and seek to forget the cares of state for a season.

ESTHER (*impulsively*): Thou art troubled, lord?

KING: Yea, I am troubled. Prince Haman nameth the Jews, traitors.

ESTHER: Jews—traitors? My dear lord, thou art weary. Rest thou upon this couch and bid thy scribe come read the kingdom's records; thou mayest find sleep.

KING (*reclining*): Sit thou beside me, so! Thou art dear unto me.

ESTHER: And thou art the lord of my heart. (*She sits a little behind him. She claps.*)

(*Enter the* SCRIBE.)

ESTHER: Read to the king in a low soothing voice that he may sleep. (*She, from her position behind the king, directs his reading.*)

SCRIBE: The ancestors of the king—(ESTHER *shakes her head*; SCRIBE *turns several pages.*) It happened in the tenth month of the seventh year of the reign of Ahasuerus—may he live forever—(ESTHER *nods*) two traitors, Teresh and Bigtha, sought his life. This was a wicked plot; they would most certainly have killed the king—(*raising his voice*)—had it not been discovered by one—(*very loud*)—one, *Mordecai*—

KING: (*starting up*): Mordecai! Who then—?

SCRIBE:—by one, Mordecai, a *Jew*, a captive, who overheard the traitors what they planned, and who is *loyal* servant to

KING- "SIT THOU BESIDE ME, THOU ART DEAR UNTO ME"

the king. He told the queen, and so were the traitors hanged.

KING: Mordecai, a Jew? Send for Lord Haman! (SCRIBE *goes.*)

And what honor hath Mordecai the Jew received for this high service?

ESTHER: Dear lord, no honor hath been done to him. (*Very softly.*) And he saved for me the life of my lord, the king.

(*Enter* HAMAN.)

KING: Lord Haman, what shall be done for the man the king delights to honor?

HAMAN: Doth the king mean his humble servant, Haman?

KING: And if I do, what then? What shall be done, Lord Haman, to the man the king delights in?

HAMAN: For the man the king delights in—hum—er—let royal robes be brought; and let a chain be hung around his neck, and let one of the king's noblest princes lead him through the streets of the city, and proclaim before him: Thus shall be done to the man the king delights to honor!

KING: Make haste and do even as thou hast said—to Mordecai the Jew.

HAMAN: To Mordecai!

KING: Even so, to Mordecai!

HAMAN: O king, thou hast given me his life even now, and he is hanged—hanged on a gallows fifty cubits high!

ESTHER (*throwing herself before the king*): Ah no, no, lord, he lies! Send—beseech you, send lest it be too late!

KING: Men, bring hither Mordecai if he be yet living. (*Remaining* GUARDS *go.*)

Woman! (*He grasps* ESTHER'S *arm.*) What is thy interest in this Mordecai?

ESTHER: He saved for me the life of my lord the king.

KING: *What* is thy interest in this Mordecai?

ESTHER: Lord, when a helpless babe, my parents died, he brought me up. He is my more than father.

(*Enter four* GUARDS *with* MORDECAI, *bound.* ESTHER *runs to him.*)

ESTHER (*cries*): Father! Father!

KING (*with clearing countenance*): Haman, unbind his hands and lead him forth. Queen Esther, sit thou beside me and await their coming.

(SLAVES *bring in robe and chain, also a litter if there be one.* HAMAN, *in sulky fashion, robes* MORDECAI, *and either leads him about room, among audience, or goes before litter which* GUARDS *carry, proclaiming:* Thus shall be done to the man the king delighteth to honor. *Repeat several times. In the meantime the* SLAVES *bring in table and set it for feast. As* HAMAN *and* MORDECAI *return,* ESTHER *rises.*)

ESTHER: Lord Haman, I have bid thee to my feast.

HAMAN: O queen, a sickness is fallen upon me; I pray thee, have me excused.

ESTHER: Lord Haman, the feast awaits; the dance girls are ready. I have sweet singers and garlands of roses. Thou wilt not do dishonor to my feast?

KING (*sternly*): The queen awaits!

(HAMAN *takes his place with an ill grace, on left couch.* KING *sits on right couch.* ESTHER *turns aside to* MORDECAI.)

ESTHER: Go and assemble hither all our people. (MORDECAI *goes.* ESTHER *takes seat in center.*)

Slaves, fill the goblets; bid the dancers in!

(*Enter the* MAIDENS *of first act revolving slowly with hands meeting over head. They then divide into three groups. They place chaplets of roses on heads of* KING, QUEEN *and* HAMAN. *They dance, then chant the riddle.*)

FIRST GROUP: O king, live forever! (*They bow.*)

SECOND GROUP: O queen, live forever! (*They bow.*)

THIRD GROUP: O Lord Haman, be exalted! (*They rise a tip-toe, hands high.*)

FIRST GROUP: The king's the sun, with brightest sheen;

SECOND GROUP: The queen's the moon, with light serene;

THIRD GROUP: But when the base earth comes between, her light is quenched, no moonlight seen. (*Swaying slowly, they dance out.*)

KING: What is the meaning of this riddle, say!

ESTHER (*rising*): Lord Haman is the man of earthly mold!

KING (*also rising*): Lord Haman comes not 'twixt my queen and me.

ESTHER: I beg thy grace, O lord, to hear my petition.

HAMAN: O king, the best of women ever crave a voice in the affairs of state. Heed her not, lord!

KING: Esther, thou art my queen, and verily thy word *shall* have weight in my judgments.

What is thy petition, Queen Esther, and what is thy request? Speak, and it shall be granted thee even to the half of my kingdom.

KING: "WHAT IS THY PETITION, QUEEN ESTHER?"

ESTHER: If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request! For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed and to perish.

KING: Name thou the man who dares to seek thy life!

ESTHER: An adversary and an enemy, even this wicked Haman! (*She turns upon him.*)

(HAMAN *draws his sword;* GUARDS *seize him. The* JEWS *flock forward with* MORDECAI.)

JEWS: Save us, O king, save us, for we are sold to be destroyed and to perish!

KING: What shall be done, Queen Esther, to the man who sought thy life, thy father's and thy people's?

ESTHER: I pray thee, let his power be taken from him.

KING: Remove the Lord High Chamberlain, and hang him.

GUARD: O king, there is a gallows, very high, which the Lord Haman had built for Mordecai.

KING (*grimly*): On the gallows he had built for Mordecai, hang Haman *high!*

HAMAN (*laughing ironically as* GUARDS *drag him away*): And was it *thou,* O King Ahasuerus, who said: Men must rule their households, and women must be kept in subjection? Was it thou?

Thou art as the veriest slave, O king, in the palace of Shushan!

King Ahasuerus! Slave of his low-born queen! (*They drag him out.*)

(*The* KING *looks disturbed.* ESTHER *kneels before him.*)

ESTHER: O king, *thou* art mighty! It is *thy* hand which

casteth down, and *thy* hand which lifteth up. *Thou* art mighty!

KING: Thou sayest well!

Thou, Mordecai, art exalted this day in the place of Haman; and thy people, the Jews, shall be no more called "The children of the captivity," but "Children of the king."

I, the king, have spoken it. (*Gives him ring.*)

MORDECAI: O king, thy servants thank thee.

KING: Thank the queen.

ALL PRESENT (*shout*): Long live our beauteous queen!

ESTHER: My people, not to the king nor to the queen give thanks; but to the Lord of Hosts lift up your voice! For he hath led his children out of bondage, because they trusted in him.

All sing with arms upraised to heaven. ("Old Hundred.")

SONG:

Be thou, O Lord, exalted high!
And as thy glory fills the sky,
So let it be on earth displayed,
Till thou art here as there obeyed.

(*They pass slowly out.*)

DANIEL

THE PEOPLE

Woman of Israel.

A Boy, A Girl, } her children.

Chief, Dimon, Kir, Ili, Jarib, } Satraps of Babylon.

The Chief Satrap's Daughter.

King Darius of Babylon.

Arioch, Captain of the guard.

Daniel, a Jewish captive, Governor of Babylon.

A Little Slave Boy. (Little as may be.)

Page to the King.

A Scribe.

Two Priests of Bel.

Soldiers.

THE PLACE

Act I. *The Court of Lions in the King's palace in Babylon.*

A deep blue back-drop. The den of lions is in the background, which may be divided from rest of stage, by means of a five-foot wall, made from wall-board or from cloth, painted black (or gray, or terra cotta). This wall may be painted with Assyrian symbols (such as winged lions) or not, as desired. Three steps lead up to entrance to den (in middle) which is guarded by a latticed, black door, which swings out toward stage. (The wall may be bent like half of an octagon, from rear corners out to center.)

A fresco of Assyrian lions (painted in gold against any

color sign-cloth) may run about stage. Place a throne at one side (flanked by Assyrian lions cut from wall-board).

Act II. *A Street in Babylon*

This may be a plain yellow drop of cloth, a portion of which is cut at top to show blue back-drop. On one side is an arch, cut from the cloth. On the other side, aloft, a small window must be cut for Daniel. (Reached in back by stepladder.)

Act III. *The Court of Lions.*

THE PROPERTIES

A piece of meat for Boy.
Stuffed skin on a pole for Priests.
A tablet of clay and wooden stylus for scribe.
Wax.
Seal.
Swords for satraps.
Chain for gate.
Fans for slaves.
Spears, shields.
Parchment for Dimon.

DANIEL

Act I. *The Court of Lions*

(*In the rear is the den of lions, from which occasional growls issue. On the left is a seat flanked by painted Assyrian lions. On the walls are representations of the gods of Babylon.*)

(*Enter a* Woman of Israel *with her* Children. *The* Boy *drags at her hand.*)

Boy: Wait, little mother, wait, while I go throw my bit of meat to th' lions.

Girl (*clutches him*): I am afraid! O brother, go not too near.

Boy (*struts*): I do not fear the lions, I!

Woman: Little braggart! (*Gives his ear a tweak.*)

Girl: Thou didst run this very morn before a goat. (*She points finger of scorn.*)

Boy: He had horns.

Girl: And a lion hath teeth and *claws*.

Boy: Well anyway, when I am as big as the Lord Daniel, I shall not be afraid of anything, not even of Dimon the satrap.

Woman: Speak not of that monster, who stole thee from me; take lesson by him and seek to be good like Daniel—

Girl: Thou wilt never be as good. (*Shakes her head vigorously.*)

Boy: I don't mean to try, but I shall be as brave.

GIRL: Thou wilt not!

BOY: I will! (*They stick out their tongues at one another in a custom old as Babylon.*)

WOMAN: My son, bravery is trust in the goodness of God.

BOY: There go the priests of Bel with the meat from the temple.

(*Two* PRIESTS *enter bearing a dead animal for the lions. They drop it inside the den. The* LIONS *roar their appreciation.* PRIESTS *go out.*)

BOY: Was that a beast the men of Babylon slay in honor of heathen gods?

WOMAN: Yea! That is why Daniel will not eat of meat—because it is offered first to the gods of Babylon.

BOY: I would not mind its being offered to the gods if I had the eating of it.

GIRL: Thou pig!

WOMAN: Foolish little one! Come, children, we will wait yonder till the king approacheth. He shall give us justice.

(*They pass out, the* BOY *throwing his meat to the lions as they go.*)

(*The* CHIEF SATRAP *enters, leaning on a stick and his* DAUGHTER'S *arm.*)

CHIEF SATRAP: Wait, girl, not so fast! (*He pants.*) Why haste ye? (*He shakes his finger at her.*) I know, I know. Thou thinkest to meet with that fellow, Arioch. Well, thou shalt not! Remember thou art a satrap's daughter.

DAUGHTER (*plaintively*): Arioch hath won favor of the king, O my father.

CHIEF SATRAP: Aye, of the king! The king favors any up-

start. He maketh Arioch, a man of no birth, captain of his guard, and he maketh a Jew Lord Governor of Babylon!

DAUGHTER: Thou meanest Lord Daniel? (*Eagerly.*) But he is prince in his own land, and mighty in wisdom and—

CHIEF SATRAP: Aye, contradict me! Beard me! What children are coming to—! (*He starts to hit her with his stick.*)

(JARIB *enters; they salute.*)

JARIB: Hail, satrap! Bel protect thee!

CHIEF SATRAP: Dost come from the king?

JARIB (*moodily*): Aye!

CHIEF SATRAP: Anger stirs thee. I can guess—

JARIB (*bursts out violently*): Lord, how long? How long shall this upstart Jew, this Daniel, rule in Babylon?

The king dotes on him. It is, "My Lord Daniel, this," and "My Lord Daniel, that," and, "As my Lord Daniel commands!" Curses on him!

I am wearied of my Lord Daniel.

CHIEF SATRAP (*nodding*): Aye, aye!

JARIB: One can do nothing against him.

CHIEF SATRAP: *One* can do nothing, but (*with sudden violence*)—but if *all*, if *all* the satraps—there they pass even now to the council. (*To* DAUGHTER.) Go, girl, bid them hither. (*She goes out to the left. He seizes* JARIB'S *cloak.*) If we all stand together we may devise—

(*Enter* ILI, KIR *and* DIMON. *All bow low. The* SATRAP'S DAUGHTER *follows.*)

CHIEF: Hail, satraps, ye seek the king?

KIR: Aye. I wish the death of my wife's brother; he hath offended me.

ILI (*cunningly*): And he hath moneys, eh?

CHIEF: And you, Satrap of Cilicia?

DIMON (*raising his arms wildly*): I go to cry for justice on Daniel, the captive Jew who rules the king of Babylon.

CHIEF: Ah! (*He looks meaningly at* JARIB.)

JARIB: Ah! (*He looks meaningly at* CHIEF.)

DIMON: Hearken! (*They draw into a close group.*) Was I not well within my rights? My slave boy was insolent, and I ordered him thrown to the crocodiles, and lo, this Daniel, passing, laid hold upon the child, and took him from me.

JARIB: And dost thou think the *king* will give thee justice? (*Scornfully.*) I tell thee he is bewitched by this same Daniel.

DIMON: Ha, sorcery?

ILI: Doubtless!

KIR: It is well known this Daniel serveth a false god. He worshipeth neither Bel-Merodach, Nebo, nor our Lady Ishtar. He prayeth to a Jewish god called "Jehovah."

ILI: Aye, aye! Morn and noon and night Daniel prayeth to his god. I have seen him oft at his open window, his face turned toward Jerusalem.

JARIB: He will not enter our temples, nor eat of the meat of our sacrifices lest—it—defile—him. (*All laugh loudly.*)

DIMON: I have a thought!

CHIEF SATRAP: Share it.

ILI: Tell us!

DIMON (*with a wave of his hand*): Go ye on with your babbling; I will develop my thought. (*He walks apart from the others, his hands behind his back, brooding over his plans.*)

JARIB: See you, since Daniel hath been given the rule over us, he hath forbid the sale of charms and prophecies. (*With a sigh.*) I have lost much moneys.

ILI: He hath ruined *me*. He saith I may not *sell* justice; I must *give* it.

JARIB: Who ever heard the like in Babylon!

KIR: Let us all go before the king and accuse him.

DIMON (*scornfully tosses the words over his shoulder*): Of what? Accuse him of what?

CHIEF SATRAP (*meaningly*): We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it concerning the law of his god.

JARIB: Exactly!

DIMON (*comes swiftly forward*): Hearken, my friends, I have my plan perfected. This Daniel will not worship our gods? Well—? He prayeth openly unto his god? Well—? Suppose the king forbade Daniel to pray? Would he cease?

JARIB: He would not cease if twenty kings forbade.

ILI: But—will the king forbid?

DIMON: Leave it to me.

KIR: There comes the king now, leaning as usual on the arm of Daniel.

DIMON: Come and I will disclose to you my plan.

(*The* SATRAPS *pass out in front of the curtain to the extreme right, where they confer with heads close together.* DIMON

produces a piece of parchment and writes upon it. [*Omit this if stage does not permit.*] *During this, the* KING *enters with* DANIEL, *followed by* PAGE *and small* SLAVE. *The* WOMAN *and her* CHILDREN *enter at the same time, from opposite side.* ARIOCH *enters behind the king and goes direct to the* SATRAP'S DAUGHTER. *They sit or stand, conversing on extreme left. The* KING *sits on throne.*)

KING: My Lord Daniel, stand thou beside me and we will judge this case. (*To* SLAVE.) Now, boy, thy wish?

SLAVE BOY: O king—I mean, O live forever! I want to serve my Lord Daniel. My master, the Satrap, he did order me thrown to the crocodiles, and my Lord Daniel said: "Thou shalt not!"

And he didn't.

Lord Daniel is mightiest of the mighty; I would serve him.

KING: Lord Daniel, wilt have him?

DANIEL: O king, I saved the imp, but if I keep him, the satrap may well cry out against me. Give the youngster to Arioch—

SLAVE BOY: No, no, lord! To thee; only to thee! Else will I seek the crocodiles myself—

KING: Verily thou canst not resist him. (*To* BOY.) Rest content, boy; it shall be as thou wilt. I will declare my wish unto the satrap, thy master.

SLAVE BOY: Thou art lord of lords. (*He bows and takes his place behind* DANIEL.)

KING: I will share with thee a confidence, Lord Daniel: The satraps of my kingdom do not love thee.

DANIEL: No secret is that, Lord King.

KING (*quickly*): Doth any seek to injure thee?

DANIEL (*facing king*): What is that to thee, O King Darius?

KING: This it is to me: Thou art honored by me. If any seek to injure thee he dieth.

ARIOCH: I am consenting to that, Lord King!

WOMAN (*advances*): O king, live forever! Hail, Daniel, Prince of Judah and Governor of Babylon, hail!

CHILDREN: Hail!

DANIEL: Peace be with thee, daughter of Israel!

WOMAN: Ye say, Peace, and there is no peace. I want not peace but justice. Kneel, my children, kneel. (CHILDREN *kneel with clasped hands.*)

KING: What is thy wrong, woman, and who hath wronged thee?

WOMAN: One of thy satraps, he hath wronged me and most foully. I am only a captive, lord, of the Israelites, but is it thy law that our children be taken from us and sold as slaves?

KING: Who hath done this?

WOMAN: Dimon, Satrap of Cilicia! He seized this child and made me pay much moneys to redeem him.

KING (*claps*): Seek the Lord Dimon; bid him attend. (PAGE *bows.*)

PAGE: O king, I fly. (*He rushes out, collides with the* SATRAPS *who are entering.* DIMON *falls one way; the* PAGE *another. The* PAGE *jumps up and tugs at* DIMON.) Enter, my Lord Dimon! King Darius calls. (*In a loud whisper.*) Hist! Thou art food for lions!

DIMON: Hail to thee, King Darius!

OTHER SATRAPS: Hail, O king!

KING (*lazily*): Lord Dimon, thou art accused—Daniel, this is thy affair. I have set thee over my city of Babylon. Repeat the charge.

DANIEL: This woman accuseth thee of seizing her child—

WOMAN: This child ye see, lords. (*Pushes* BOY *forward.* BOY *shrinks from* DIMON.)

DANIEL:—and making her pay money to redeem him!

DIMON (*insolently*): And since when hath it been deemed a crime in Babylon, to sell a child, a Jew—

DANIEL: Since King Darius made me governor!

DIMON (*to* KING): Dost thou make Daniel judge? Then I am doomed.

KING: Thou art guilty?

DIMON: I deny the *crime.* But Daniel will favor one of his own people.

KING: He will deal justly; go thou.

(DIMON *makes a move of protest, but a soldier touches him; he turns sulkily and goes out, followed by* DANIEL, *the* WOMAN *and her* CHILDREN, *and* SLAVE BOY.)

BOY (*to his mother as they pass out*): O mother, I am afraid of that bad man. Will he have me cast into the den of lions, mother, or into the burning fiery furnace?

GIRL: Thou silly! (*Curtain falls behind them.*)

CHIEF SATRAP: O King Darius, it is not in me to rejoice that thou hast set over us a captive Jew, but I acknowledge him a master of wisdom.

JARIB (*smoothly*): And how just a judge!

ILI (*as though resolved to be just*): And his abilities! Marvelous!

KING (*laughingly to* ARIOCH): They are not wont to speak such words of wisdom.

ARIOCH: They have experienced a change of heart.

CHIEF SATRAP: O king, do not mock thy servants. Truly it was not to speak praise of the Lord Daniel, which brought us hither, but a more urgent matter. Lord King, we have discovered a great plot.

KING: A plot?

ARIOCH (*with hand on sword advances hastily*): Where are the evildoers?

CHIEF SATRAP: Nay, that is what we cannot discover.

ILI: We but know that they have sworn an oath never to bow the knee to thee nor to the gods of Babylon.

KING: Find me these men; do not rest until ye bring them.

CHIEF SATRAP: O king, we have consulted together and have sought out a way. Do thou make a strong interdict that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. (*Indicates den with wave of hand.*)

JARIB: So, O king, shall we discover these men who do not acknowledge thee as king of kings.

KING (*thoughtfully*): Hum! It soundeth well, yet—where is my Lord Daniel? I would consult—

ARIOCH: Shall I bid him hither?

KING: Yea—no! Attend, O satraps: I will sign the edict

against these men, who plot against me, but ye, ye also must cease your plotting.

SATRAPS (*in righteous indignation*): We, king? We, plot?

KING: Aye, cease your plotting against Lord Daniel. O, I have seen you put your heads together that ye might destroy him. It must cease. I have set him over all of you, and nothing shall remove him from the high seat of my favor.

CHIEF SATRAP: O king, that was in the past. Sign thou this interdict and never again shalt thou have cause to complain.

JARIB: Here is the interdict, fair writ. (*Produces parchment.*) Boy, bring some wax.

(*The* PAGE *brings wax. The* KING *glances over edict, and stamps it with his ring.*)

KING: I stamp this edict with the great seal of the Medes and Persians.

SATRAPS: Which no man can annul. (*With triumph* KIR *takes edict.*)

(DIMON *enters hastily, followed by* DANIEL, WOMAN *and* CHILDREN, SLAVE BOY *and* SOLDIERS.)

DIMON: O king, O king, I cry against this judgment of Daniel. He hath declared my goods forfeit to the law. I cry—

KING (*rises and leans menacingly toward* DIMON): By the gods, ye shall learn that I have set Daniel over you, over you. Do ye not understand that with your thick skulls? What he declares, shall be. Pay then, lest a worse thing befall you.

DIMON (*cowed*) : O king, I—I will pay. (*He retires.* CHIEF SATRAP *joins him and whispers to him. Slowly a fat smile spreads over his face.*)

WOMAN : The God of Israel guard thee, O Daniel, Governor of Babylon!

BOY (salutes) : Hail to Daniel! (WOMAN *and her* CHILDREN *pass out.*)

KING (*rising*) : My Lord Daniel, let me lean on thee; I would enjoy the silver stillness of my garden ere cometh the deadening heat of day.

KIR : O my Lord King, should not the governor of Babylon be informed of what happed in the council while he was absent? (KING *nods, and turning away, joins* ARIOCH *and* SATRAP'S DAUGHTER.)

The king hath signed an interdict. Let me read to my Lord Daniel the interdict which the king hath signed with the seal of the Medes and Persians which altereth not.

DANIEL : Read, O satrap!

KIR (*reads*) : Hearken, ye men of Babylon, Chaldea and Persia : Be it known to you this day, that whosoever shall ask or petition of any god or man for thirty days, save only of the king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

Given in the fifth day of month Ululu—(*Pause while* KIR *looks up to read* DANIEL'S *face.*)

DIMON : My Lord Daniel says naught. Doth he perchance deem the interdict unwise?

Alack! But it is signed with the great seal, according to the laws of the Medes and the Persians, which altereth not and which no man may annul.

SATRAPS (*maliciously eyeing* DANIEL): And which no man may annul.

(DANIEL *eyes the* SATRAPS *steadily; they regard him triumphantly.* DANIEL *turns to the* KING *and speaks clearly as though the* SATRAPS *were not worthy of his attention.*)

DANIEL: O king, the shadows shorten. If thou wouldest see thy gardens ere the dews rise—

KING: Come, the day is sweet.

(*All pass out. The* CHIEF SATRAP, *seeing his daughter with* ARIOCH, *hobbles to her and drags her after him.* ARIOCH *follows with a smile.*)

ACT II. *A Street in Babylon.*

(*It is late afternoon. People pass along the street, a couple of slaves, a few soldiers. The* BOY *and* GIRL *chase one another in and through the arch. The* MOTHER *follows. Presently* DANIEL *enters, followed by his little* SLAVE BOY.)

SLAVE BOY (*urgently*): Lord, thou must let me serve thee. The king hath commanded. I will go before thee and cry: Way for Lord Daniel! Way! (*He struts.*)

DANIEL: Little one, thou wouldest not like to tread my way.

SLAVE BOY: Aye, that would I—though it lead to the lion's jaw!

(*The* SATRAP'S DAUGHTER *enters hastily; she calls in a hushed voice.*)

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER: O my lord, my Lord Daniel!

DANIEL (*in surprise*): Thou, maiden? Hast thy father word for me?

DANIEL AND THE SATRAP'S DAUGHTER

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER: No, no! O my lord, they plot against thee to do thee mischief—my father and the other satraps! I would warn thee.

DANIEL (*dreamily*): I read them, maiden. But they can do nothing except it be God's will.

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER (*impatiently*): O my Lord Daniel, awake, awake! They can cast thee to the lions, if they find thee praying unto thy god.

O my lord, do not pray for thirty days.

DANIEL: Not *pray?*

SLAVE BOY: The maiden urges wisdom.

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER: Or, at least, pray not so men may see thee. (*She lays a timid hand on his arm.*) O my lord, beseech thee! Dost thou not care for life?

DANIEL (*courteously*): Thou art kind to me, who am but a Jew and a captive.

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER: Thou hast been good to Arioch, the Captain of the Guard; we—we would serve thee. (*Looks about anxiously.*)

My father and the other satraps, they will lie in wait to mark thee when thou prayest.

SLAVE BOY: The satraps have an evil spirit; heed the maiden, lord.

DANIEL (*smiling at* BOY): I see that thou wilt be a valuable counselor. (*To Maiden.*) And dost thou think that if I closed my window, where I am wont to pray, and barred my door and prayed in secret, that my God, to whom I prayed thus fearfully, would hear me?

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER (*hopefully*): Would he not, lord?

DANIEL (*decidedly*): By God's will, my body is captive here in great Babylon; is it God's will, think you, that my spirit also rest in captivity?

My spirit is free, free as the mountains—free to worship God, and shall I fear?

I will be for a sign in Babylon the mighty, that my God is the only living God.

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER: Yea—but—dost thou not fear the lions?

DANIEL: Fear—the lions? Yea, I fear the lions—; but I fear God more.

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER (*earnestly*): O lord, would not thy god forgive thee, if thou didst not pray?

DANIEL (*simply*): Forgive me? There would be no question of forgiveness; but—I should lose knowledge of God.

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER (*excitedly*): O lord, lord, *defy* the satraps! Pray, and thy god be with thee! (*She bends, kisses the hem of his robe, and slips away.*)

(*There is a short pause; then the* SLAVE BOY *touches* DANIEL.)

SLAVE BOY (*resignedly*): If it must be, let us go, lord, and pray.

DANIEL (*bending over him*): Lad, thou must not go with me; there is danger.

SLAVE BOY: Whither thou goest, I go, lord, dear lord.

(*They pass together under the arch,* DANIEL'S *arm about the boy. The* SLAVES *re-enter, chattering, and pass out. The* SATRAPS *enter cautiously from right.* KIR *tiptoes to arch, peers under, and tiptoes back.*)

KIR: He enters now his door. Come, it is safe.

(*The* SATRAPS *cross street hurriedly and hide under arch, whence they can peer up at* DANIEL'S *window.*)

ILI (*points*): Is that the casement at which he prays?

JARIB: Aye, with his face turned toward Jerusalem!

DIMON: Most times he prays there, but this even, mark you, he will draw tight the shutter and make fast the door. He will not face the sunset light—

JARIB (*in alarm*): Then how shall we discover him?

CHIEF SATRAP: Trust to me! I have a sister lives next door, and she hath a peephole by which we may peep into his chamber; and when he thinks he is in secret—

JARIB: Ha! ha! ha! (*He tries to smother his laughter.*)

CHIEF SATRAP: Be quiet! Fool! Idiot! (*All frown on* JARIB.)

JARIB: But—but such a joke! He will lose the favor of his god, by praying in secret—and—and—(*Roars with mirth.*)

KIR (*slowly*): Suppose he do *not* pray? (*All look aghast.*)

CHIEF SATRAP: Not *pray?*

DIMON: By Ishtar!
ILI: By Bel-Merodach!
JARIB: By Nebo!
} (*All speak together.*)

KIR: What shall we do?

JARIB: Ye gods, but he *must* pray. I will make a mock of him, I will say: Thy god, he is powerless to protect thee, eh?

CHIEF SATRAP: I will say, The Hebrews are a race of cowards—

KIR: I shall cry, Hail to Daniel, the faint-hearted— (*All*
ILI: He shall be made to bow before our gods— *speak*
JARIB: By all the gods of Babylon, if he do not pray— *to-*
DIMON: I shall spit upon him, I shall spit in his very— *gether.*)

CHIEF SATRAP: Szz! (*Raises hand for caution.*)

(*The window overhead is thrown open. The* SATRAPS *crowd under arch, then crowd forward, with hand to ear, listening.* DANIEL *appears at window. There is a moment's pause; then he stretches out his arms toward Jerusalem. He begins in a low, earnest voice which gradually gains in strength. There are frequent pauses.*)

DANIEL: O Lord God of Israel—hear my prayer: . . .
My cry is unto thee! . . .
Thou madest man to have *dominion* . . . *over*
The fish of the sea—the fowl of the air! . . .
To tread upon the lion and the adder . . .
The young lion and the dragon.
O Lord, thou hast given man *dominion*—
Thou wilt deliver—who trusteth in thee.
Hear my prayer, O Lord, for the night cometh. (*His voice drops. He withdraws from window.*)

(CHIEF SATRAP *strides forward followed by others.*)

CHIEF SATRAP: Ho, guard! To me, here!

(*Two* SOLDIERS *enter.*)

CHIEF SATRAP: Arrest Lord Daniel, the Governor of Babylon, and bring him to King Darius.

SATRAPS: We, the satraps of Babylon, command! (*They sweep proudly out.*)

(*The two* SOLDIERS *look at one another.*)

First Soldier: Arrest Lord Daniel? Not I!

Second Soldier: Nor I, neither!

(*Curtain.*)

Act III. *The Court of Lions.*

(Arioch *and the* Satrap's Daughter *are walking together.*)

Arioch: Thy lips are as scarlet as the juice of the pomegranate; thy voice—

Satrap's Daughter: Thou wilt do what I beseech thee? (*Pleadingly.*)

Arioch (*seeking to change the subject*): Thine eyes are bright as my sword; thy hair is like twilight falling—

Satrap's Daughter: Yea, but—wilt thou do my pleasure?

Arioch: Thou art like the doe in meekness, and like the lioness in courage—

Satrap's Daughter (*ceasing her walk and facing him*): And wilt thou act the lion, O Captain of the Guard?

Arioch (*regarding her uncertainly*): Hum-m—

Satrap's Daughter: My father and the others, they go to accuse Daniel. Thou—thou hast favor with the king; plead thou before him. (Arioch *half shakes his head; she holds out her hands to him.*)

Not to please me?

Arioch: If I go against thy father, *perchance* I *lose* thee.

Satrap's Daughter: Dear my lord, scorn "perchances."

Arioch: Nor could I save Daniel, if he break the law. The king hath sealed the interdict—

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER: What are laws? Poof! If I were but a man—! What is a king, that he may not break a law?

ARIOCH: No man may break a law of the Medes and Persians —and live.

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER: I care nothing for the laws; we must save Daniel. (*She moves a pace from him, then returns quickly.*)

I have a thought: Bid the king make a new decree. (*He shakes his head.*) Thou wilt not? O I hate thee, hate thee, hate thee!

Then I shall go myself before the king—

ARIOCH: Thy father—he—what will he do to thee?

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER: I care not, I! (*Turns to him again.*) Prithee! (*He shakes his head; she walks haughtily off.*) O thou art—art—despisable! (*Exit.*)

(ARIOCH *knits his brows and shrugs impatiently. Enter the* KING'S PAGE.)

PAGE: My Lord Arioch, I am sent to fetch thee. The king—but he approaches.

(KING DARIUS *enters.*)

ARIOCH: O king, live forever! Thy servant was enjoying the evening cool.

KING: The day was breathless—a stilly heat, which lingers yet. (*To* PAGE.) Go, bid the slaves bring fans. (PAGE *goes.*)

Come with me, view my lions. (*They mount steps at rear and look over.*) See'st thou that one asleep, his monster head in shadow? He hath slain twenty men.

And that one yonder—

ARIOCH: The finest, to my thinking!

KING: He was the terror of three villages. Five slaves died when they snared him.

ARIOCH: They are quiet, an ominous quiet—(*Moves away.*) This place is terrible.

KING (*follows, amused*): Say you so?

(*There is a distant cry.*)

ARIOCH: Hark!

CRY IN DISTANCE: To the lions! To the lions!

(*Enter the* PAGE, *the* SLAVES *with fans, then the* SLAVE BOY. *He runs in and throws himself at the feet of the king.*)

SLAVE BOY (*panting*): O lord, lord, do not heed their lying tongues!

(*The* SATRAPS *enter, followed by all the* SOLDIERS *save those told to arrest* DANIEL.)

SATRAPS (*bowing low*): O King Darius, hail!

KING: What seek ye, satraps?

JARIB: O my lord the king, how may we say it?

KING: Speak!

ILI: How it grieves us to bear these tidings—

KIR: O lord, be prepared—a great disaster hath befallen thy kingdom. The Lord Daniel—

KING: Speak, fool! Are thy wits clean gone? My Lord Daniel, is he ill?

KIR (*cowering*): N-n-no, no, not ill, b—but mad! No otherwise can I explain—

KING (*desperately*): Am I surrounded by madmen?

CHIEF SATRAP (*smoothly*): Not so, Lord King! The other lords may fear thee, but I tremble not to state that we have

—er—discovered the—er—rock of offense, the rebel to thy authority.

SLAVE BOY: No, no, lord, no!

KING (*points to* BOY, *sarcastically*): Ah, ye mean this lad?

DIMON: O king, hast thou not signed an interdict that every man that shall make a petition unto any god or man, for thirty days, save unto thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions?

KING: The thing is true.

DIMON: That Daniel who is of the captivity of the children of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, but maketh his petition unto his god—

KING (*in a low, menacing voice*): O brood of vipers! Was it for this ye sought the interdict? And even while ye swore no more to plot against Daniel, ye meant him evil in your hearts? (*Pause while they confront one another.*)

But I am yet king in Babylon; will ye deny it?

SATRAPS (*bowing low*): O king, live forever!

KING (*his voice gradually rising*): I am yet king in Babylon the mighty. And I declare Daniel, Prince of Judah, governor of this my city, to be of more value than all of ye!

And shall I sacrifice *Daniel* unto *you?*

DIMON (*slowly*): O king, not unto *us* but to the *law*!

KING (*wildly*): I know no law! I am above the law!

(*All the* SATRAPS *shake their heads, slowly and smilingly.*)

KIR: O king, wilt thou despise the law which thou hast made?

JARIB: Shall our laws bow to Daniel?

CHIEF SATRAP: Daniel hath defied thee and the law of Babylon.

SATRAPS: Let him suffer the death!

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER: No, no, Lord, no! (*She enters swiftly and kneels before king; she is clad in white and gold.*)

O lord king, Daniel hath done no wrong. He is kind and —and courageful. Do not cast him to the lions—not to the lions! Beseech thee, lord—.

(*The* KING *eyes her moodily. Her father drags her roughly up, and shakes her.*)

CHIEF SATRAP: What mean you, girl? Is not thy modesty offended? Shameless one, thou shalt taste the rod!

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER (*shaking herself free*): I care not—

CHIEF SATRAP: What! Dost beard me? (*He strikes her.*)

(ARIOCH *springs forward and catches his arm, pushing the girl to his other side.*)

CHIEF SATRAP: Hands off, fellow! Art thou a rebel too? Aye, rebel, I say! Who pleads for Daniel is a rebel, and traitor to the laws of Babylon.

SATRAPS ALL: Aye, rebel!

ARIOCH: Rebel, then! (*He stands before the king.*)

I plead before the king that he set aside the law of Babylon, even the law which he hath signed with the great seal, for it is an evil law, that he consume it with the breath of his mouth, and let right triumph!

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER (*holding out her arms*): Hear, O King Darius!

(*The* SATRAPS *draw their swords and sway toward* ARIOCH, *speaking all together.*)

CHIEF SATRAP: Rebel!

JARIB: Despiser of authority!

DIMON: Traitor!

ILI: Mocker! Son of evil!

KIR: Away with him!

KING (*rising and stretching out his hand imperiously*): Peace! I command ye, peace! (*Reluctantly they sheathe their swords.*)

DIMON (*bows low*): O king, thou art mighty, but thou art as nothing to the law of the Medes and the Persians. We will defend this law which thou hast signed; even against *thee* will we defend it, while life is in our bodies.

Hearken, O king, to the law of the Medes and the Persians: No interdict which the king hath signed with the great seal, shall be altered or set aside.

So runs the law in Babylon. (*Pause.*)

KING (*sinking down on his throne*): Go—call Daniel. (SOLDIERS *go.*)

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER: Thou wilt cast Daniel to the lions?

KING: O maiden, but one thing is greater than the king in Babylon—his word which he hath sworn.

ARIOCH: Lo, he cometh!

(*The* SLAVE BOY *jumps up, rubbing his arm across his eyes.*)

SLAVE BOY (*cries*): Way for the Governor of Babylon! Way! Make way!

(DANIEL *enters. The* SOLDIERS *follow without touching him. The* KING *goes a few steps to meet him and speaks tremulously.*)

KING: O Daniel, servant of God, thou hast heard? Thou knowest?

DANIEL: O king, I have heard.

THE WOMAN OF ISRAEL PLEADS BEFORE THE KING

KING: O Daniel, these be thy accusers. Dost thou deny that thou hast this day prayed unto thy God?

DANIEL: Deny it? No!

KING: Thou knewest the decree?

DANIEL: Yea!

KING (*waits for* DANIEL *to speak further, then turns with a despairing gesture to the* SOLDIERS): Take him and cast him to the lions.

SLAVE BOY: Thou shalt not dare! (*Throws himself in front of* DANIEL.)

(*The* SOLDIERS *cast him aside. They take* DANIEL *and lead him to entrance of den.*)

KING: O Daniel, thy God whom thou servest continuously, *he* will deliver thee?

DANIEL: O king, he will deliver. Who is God, save the Lord?

DIMON (*laughing and swaggering forward*): Who is God? Bel-Merodach is god, Nebo and Ishtar, these be the gods of Babylon who have given *us* power, and have delivered *thee* to the jaws of the lion.

DANIEL: O Lord, there is none like unto thee among the gods. O Lord, thou art God alone.

(*The* SOLDIERS *give him a slight push into the den of lions, then clang the door to, in haste.*)

CHIEF SATRAP: Bring forth the great seal of Babylon.

(*The* KING *yields his seal. The* SOLDIERS *attach chain and seal it. They stand on either side to guard the portal. The* KING *watches moodily and then turns on the* SATRAPS *passionately.*)

KING: Now get ye gone, get ye gone, I say!

CHIEF SATRAP: But—

KING (*snarls*): Get ye *gone!*

(*The* SATRAPS *huddle out, the* CHIEF *dragging his* DAUGHTER.)

ARIOCH (*low*): Hark to the Jews! They wail without the walls.

(*Distant wail of Jews.* MUSIC—*See pages 83-85.*)

Cry ye! Cry ye! For great Babylon—and Chaldea—the mighty!
For great Babylon and Chaldea the mighty!
Her destruction cometh.
Declare it—among the nations: Babylon must perish!
Flee ye from out the land of the Chaldeans;
Get ye forth from Babylon,
From the wrath of Jehovah!
Woe to Babylon—and Chaldea—the mighty!
Her destruction cometh.
Jehovah! Jehovah! Jehovah!

KING (*takes a step toward den of lions*):

O Daniel, Daniel, would to God I had perished ere I slew thee!
Let Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
The beauty of the Chaldean's pride,
Let Babylon perish,
And all the graven images of her gods
Be broken to the ground—
Only deliver thou him in safety,
O God of Daniel!

(*He sinks down on the steps leading to den. The* SLAVE BOY *runs and kneels beside him.*)

(*The curtain descends to mark the hour of the night. During the latter part of the preceding scene, the light has grown gradually dimmer. It is almost dark as the scene concludes. When the curtain rises, if possible have the lights of sunrise appear. The* KING *is seated on his throne, his chin cupped in his hands. The* PAGE *is asleep behind throne. The* SLAVE GIRLS *are yawning; they hold their fans slackly. The* SLAVE BOY *is still on steps. Two* SOLDIERS *on guard.*)

ARIOCH (*advances with hesitation to the* KING): My lord, the king—My lord the king—(*He approaches nearer and speaks more loudly.*) O king, the morning cometh.

KING (*vacantly*): Aye, the morning!

ARIOCH: The lord of light is rising on another day. The east is pale color of hyacinth. Wilt thou not rest?

KING: Rest? Rest? Aye, when I shall have forgot—(*He raises his head and speaks with menace.*) Those men, those satraps of my kingdom who have used me, *me,* Darius of Babylon, them I will not forget. Go, guard, and summon to me the satraps of my kingdom. (*One* GUARD *salutes and hastens out.*) Doubtless they sleep in peace: I will wake them. (*Pause.*) The night has been dark and still, O captain of the guard.

ARIOCH: Aye, still!

KING: The quiet of the grave.

ARIOCH: No sound from yonder—as though—his god—had stilled the lions' roar.

SLAVE BOY (*springing up from step*): O lord, hark! Hark!

DANIEL OUT OF THE LIONS' DEN

I hear a stir yonder, a voice of prayer. (*Clambers up steps and cries*) : My Lord Daniel! My Lord Daniel!

KING (*starts, listens, then approaches den*) : O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continuously able to deliver thee from the lions?

(*There is a pause, then the voice of* DANIEL *is heard in distance.*)

DANIEL : O king, live forever!

SLAVE BOY (*fumbling at chain, excitedly*) : Break the seal, break the seal, O king!

ARIOCH : He *liveth!* (*He and* GUARD *open gate, and step back hastily.*)

KING : O Daniel, come forth, come forth.

(*Slowly* DANIEL *mounts the steps leading out of den. Beside him appears the head of a lion for a brief minute; then as* DANIEL *passes through gate, the* GUARD *closes it in a panic.*)

SLAVE BOY (*flinging himself before* DANIEL) : My Lord Daniel! My Lord Daniel!

KING : O Daniel, it is well with thee? Praised be all the gods of Babylon!

DANIEL : Praise the one living God!

O King Darius, my God hath sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me, for as much as before him innocency was found in me, and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

KING : O Daniel, verily *thy* God is God.

SLAVE BOY : Thy God is God.

(*The* SATRAPS, GUARDS *and* SCRIBE *enter.*)

CHIEF SATRAP: Hail to thee, King Darius! (*Sees* DANIEL.) The gods have mercy!

KING: Ho, satraps, be glad and rejoice. The God of Daniel hath shut the lions' mouths.

JARIB (*elbows his way forward*): Now, by Nebo, here is some trick; thou hast not dealt fairly by us, O King of Babylon—

ILI: We are betrayed—
KIR: No god hath power—
DIMON: We will not suffer— } (*All speak together.*)

KING (*snarls*): As I live, and as I have dealt by Daniel, so will I deal with you, you and your little ones. (*Turns to* GUARDS.) Go ye and bring the families of these men.
Write, O scribe!

DIMON (*flinging himself before* KING): Not death, O king, not death by the jaw of the lion!

CHIEF SATRAP: Thou darest not.

SCRIBE (*offers tablet*): O king, it is writ.

KING (*pressing his seal on tablet as he eyes* SATRAPS): I seal this decree which giveth your bodies to the lions, I seal it with the great seal of the Medes and the Persians—

ARIOCH: Which no man may annul.

(*The* SATRAPS *draw swords and surge forward; the* GUARDS *seize them and force them out.*)

DANIEL: O king, the law of the Medes and the Persians is a law of abomination! Let these people live! (*Cries outside.*)
The sound of a cry is heard in Babylon, and of great destruction in the land of the Chaldeans.

CRY WITHOUT:

Woe, woe, woe, to this great city Babylon, this strong city,
For in one hour shall thy judgment come!
Woe, woe, woe, to this great city Babylon, this strong city,
For in one hour shall she be made desolate!

(GUARDS *enter with* SATRAP'S DAUGHTER.)

GUARD: O king, we have yonder the families of the satraps, under strong guard.

SATRAP'S DAUGHTER (*stretching out her arms to* DANIEL): Hail to thee, Daniel! My heart is glad this day that thou hast gotten the victory.

DANIEL (*springs forward to feet of* KING): O lord, the maiden! Let not the maiden die!

ARIOCH (*at the same moment*): O lord king, give me the maid!

KING (*uncertainly*): I have signed the interdict: the families of the satraps, they must die!

DANIEL: Give the maid unto the man. Thus she will be no more a satrap's daughter, but wife to the captain of the guard of Babylon.

KING: Let the maiden choose. Death—or—(*The* SATRAP'S DAUGHTER *turns to* ARIOCH *smiling and gives him her hand.*)—she hath chosen.

Take her and wed her, Captain of the guard—ere the sun sets. If in the evening she be still unwed, she dieth.

ARIOCH (*saluting*): Great is Darius, great in wisdom!

KING: Nay, not I! In Daniel and in the God of Daniel is wisdom and understanding. (*Turns and faces forward.*)

Lo, I make a decree that in all the dominions of my king-

dom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God and steadfast forever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

He delivereth and he rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who—hath—delivered—Daniel—from—the—power—of—the—*lions*.

THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE

THE PEOPLE

First Soldier.
Second Soldier.
Third Soldier.
Fourth Soldier.
First Jewish Lad.
Second Jewish Lad.
Third Jewish Lad.
Ili, a lord of Babylon.
Melzar, another lord.

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.
Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego, } Jews, lords over Babylon.
Page.
Herald.
At Least Seven Jews.
Soldiers.

THE PLACE

The three scenes for the play may be set on the stage at the beginning.

Act I. *A Street in Babylon.*
Act II. *The Plain of Doura.*
Act III. *The Burning Fiery Furnace.*

Hang the sides of the stage with blue cloth.

For Act III, build a furnace wall, similar to half of an octagon, leading out from rear corners of stage; at the center of this have a door, reached by three steps. The wall may be about five or six feet high, and may be built of wall-board

or of cloth, stretched. It should be black but may be painted with Assyrian symbols. The back should be hung with red cloth, or pink and gold, a color that will glow in the red light of the fire. The gate should be a grating, so that the color may be seen through it. Inside the furnace have as powerful a red light as possible, also blue and yellow slides, so that the furnace may seem cold at first and grow in intensity. If desired, paste against the background, flames cut out of gold paper.

For Act II, conceal the furnace with a back-drop of deep blue. If it is possible, have the sunrise effects, first a deep blue slide, then red, then amber. Against the back-drop set a gilded box or table, on which at the end of Act I, may be set up the god of gold.

For Act I, stretch a wall right across stage a few feet in front of blue back-drop. This may be of wall-board or cloth, about four feet high. It may be gray, with a design of black tiles, or terra cotta, with a design in blue. Have entrance through wall a little to right. On each side of entrance set up Assyrian lions, cut from cardboard.

This is the description of the play as given. It can be given in any other way the producer desires.

THE PROPERTIES

Spears and shields.
A clay tablet.
A trumpet. (Other instruments for music if possible.)
Hammer for building god of gold.
God of gold. (This was made of four pieces of buckram, cut to resemble a god of Babylon, and painted with gold—Ver-

nis-Martin gold.) If it can be modeled from clay, so much the better!

A garland.

Chains.

Logs of wood.

COSTUME SUGGESTIONS

Let the Jews be in black and white. Let the Babylonians be in all shades of scarlet, vermilion, cerise, purple, with a very little peacock-blue.

THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE

Act I. A *Street in Babylon.*

(*Several Jewish lads run in playing. Two* Soldiers *guard the entrance to the walled garden of the king. A third* Soldier *comes through entrance and fastens a clay tablet to the wall. The other* Soldiers *inspect it critically.*)

First Soldier: What meaneth the inscription?

Third Soldier (*shrugs*): Ask the stars.

First Soldier: Canst not read?

Third Soldier: Not I! (*Scornfully.*) Am I a Jew?

Second Soldier (*who has been seriously studying the tablet*): It is a proclamation of the king! Mark ye the winged lion.

Third Soldier: Ho, fat-head! (*To* First Soldier.) By to-morrow he will discover that it is fastened to the wall.

Second Soldier: Eh?

First Jewish Lad: Ignoramuses that ye are! Lift me upon your shoulders, and *I* will interpret. (*The* Soldiers *lift him and he reads, tracing each letter with a chubby finger.*)

I, Nebuchadnezzar, conqueror of the world, to all peoples and nations: Be it known to all that I hereby place in charge of the province of Babylon the Lords Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, princes of Israel. (*Shouts.*) Hurray! Hurray!

First Soldier (*drops and shakes him*): Thou puppy! Thou Jewish brat!

(*Enter the lords,* ILI *and* MELZAR.)

ILI: Come, come, what means this?

FIRST SOLDIER (*points to sign*): See you, my Lord Ili! May Bel-Merodach fly away with Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego!

(ILI *and* MELZAR *read the tablet.*)

ILI (*wrathfully*): The Jewish dogs—to have the rule over us!

MELZAR: They are Nebuchadnezzar's pets—brought up to eat from his hand and do his bidding.

ILI: Ai, a fair picture of young Abed-nego; but Shadrach and Meshach? Nay! Nebuchadnezzar is more like to do *their* bidding than they his.

MELZAR: They will put an end to thy gaming houses, my Lord Ili.

ILI: And to thy traffic in slaves, my Lord Melzar.

MELZAR: They will poison the mind of the king against us—

ILI: Unless—

MELZAR: Unless?

ILI: Unless—we poison *first.*

MELZAR (*draws back*): Man, wouldest slay them?

ILI:

Hark'ee, if these three men should chance to die,
'Twill be the king shall slay them, and not I!

(*Enter the king's* PAGE. *He begins to speak on a low note, his voice growing shriller up to the last word when it suddenly descends.*)

PAGE:

Bow down! Bow down!

Nebuchadnezzar the Great,
Conqueror of the world,
Son of the gods,
Approacheth!

(*All bow low. As the* KING *enters,* MELZAR *and the* SOLDIERS *straighten;* ILI *remains prostrate, a somber figure in black.*)

KING:
Greetings, Lord Melzar!
Who lieth yonder with his face in the dust?

MELZAR (*solemnly*): A prince of Babylon!

KING:
The princes of Babylon are fools or knaves.
Up, sir, and tell your grievance.

ILI (*still kneeling, slowly lifts his arm and points to tablet.*)

KING:
Of course! Pshaw!
What have ye against these men, the honestest men in Babylon?

ILI (*rising*): O king, thou hast made the princes of Babylon as dust of the earth that the Jews may trample on them.

KING: The Lords Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego will serve me well.

(ILI *and* MELZAR *smile, shrug, spread out their palms and turn away.*)

KING: Bah! Say something!

MELZAR: No man can loyally serve King Nebuchadnezzar who prefers his *god* unto his *king.*

ILI: My *king,* he is my *god;* may he ever be right! But *right* or *wrong,* my king!

MELZAR: Our king can do no wrong.

KING (*sarcastically*): Exactly! And so I have made these men lords over Babylon.

Think you I read not men? I have fed them from my plate; they have supped from my cup: they are mine!

MELZAR: And where thou sayest, "Do *this!*" and their god Jehovah, sayeth, "Do *that!*" they will—

ILI: Do *that,* even if it lead to the jaw of the lion.

KING: Thou liest! Thou crawlest behind their back to injure them; thou darest not face them.

ILI: I dare. More, I will wager ten talents of silver that I am right.

KING: Agreed!

ILI: But wilt thou dare to prove them?

KING: Dare? For that word thy life is forfeit—if thou lose.

ILI: And if I win?

KING:

Thou shalt be Lord of Babylon.
What is thy test?

(ILI *hesitates.* MELZAR *whispers to him.* ILI *nods and turns to* KING.)

ILI: Set up a golden god and bid them worship; bid them but bow down.

KING (*laughing*): Is that thy test? Pooh! As I would bow to their god, so shall they bow to mine. The gods should not be jealous.

MELZAR: Yet 'tis said, the Lord Jehovah is a *jealous* god.

KING (*growing angry*): If they bow not—if they refuse me—in that same hour shall they all be cast to the burning fiery furnace.

ILI: Ah! (*Looks significantly at* MELZAR.)

MELZAR: Ah!

ILI (*bowing low*): Give thy servants leave to depart, O king.

KING: Whither?

ILI: O king, to kindle the fire!

KING (*grimly*): Thou *hast* kindled a fire; go now and prepare the god of gold. (*They bow and turn; the* KING *calls*): Ohé! And pay for it *thyself*.

ILI: Yea, Lord King—with what I shall win from thee. (*They go.*)

KING: Bah! To prove them wrong I would lose a hundred talents of pure silver.

ILI (*returning*): There cometh Abed-nego; ask him now.

(ABED-NEGO *enters, bowing to* ILI *as he passes out.*)

KING: Hither, man! Dost desire the life of thine enemies?

ABED-NEGO: Yea, truly! (*Laughs.*) Yet Meshach saith a time will come when all men shall *love* their enemies.

KING: The gods forbid!

Hark'ee, the life of your enemies ye shall have, if ye but serve me.

ABED-NEGO: To the death, O king!

KING (*pettishly*): Death! Death! I want not your death. (*Turns to* SOLDIER.)

Attend! Go, bid my Jewish slaves make holiday on the

plain of Doura on the seventh day; then will I speak my pleasure. (SOLDIER *salutes and turns.*) Ohé! Say also, because of my love for this Jewish prince, I will give the Jews a thousand pieces of silver to build a temple in which they may serve their god.

ABED-NEGO: O king, thy goodness is great toward Israel.

KING (*coldly*): I have an *open* mind; I am interested in *all* the gods, Jehovah among the rest.

(*Curtain*)

ACT II. *The Plain of Doura.*

(*Remove the wall; set up the god of gold.*)

(*It is just before dawn. The stage is dark save for a faint red gleam on the horizon in back of statue. Sounds of hammer and nails, as the* SOLDIERS *work upon the image.*)

VOICE OF THIRD SOLDIER: Hail, O thou god whom our own hands have fashioned! Smite thou the Jews for us and we will bring thee garlands of marigolds.

(*The light strengthens.*)

FIRST SOLDIER: Peace, fool, and hasten. The Jews assemble here at dawn; if our work be not finished, the Lord Ili will have our heads.

THIRD SOLDIER: Will not the god protect his makers?

FIRST SOLDIER: Bah! Trust thine own fat head for protection. I have no belief in the gods.

SECOND SOLDIER: Fat-head thou! 'Tis said in Babylon that this god will but lift his finger and the Jews will all fall down before him.

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FIRST SOLDIER (*cunningly*): Ai! That will be because the *king* standeth *behind* the god.

THIRD SOLDIER (*looks behind god and says simply*): He couldn't without being seen.

FIRST SOLDIER } (*roaring with laughter*): Ha, ha, ha!
SECOND SOLDIER } Fool! Dunce! Idiot!

(*Enter other* SOLDIERS. *All salute.*)

FOURTH SOLDIER: Attention: we are to guard the roads that the Jews escape not. (FIRST, SECOND, *and* THIRD SOLDIERS *pick up tools and pass to left. Other* SOLDIERS, *with exception of* FOURTH, *pass to right.*)

(*The three* JEWISH LADS *run in.*)

FIRST LAD: Ai! A new god for Babylon!

SECOND LAD: A mushroom god, sprung in the night!

THIRD LAD: Hei, soldier, his head sits unsteady.

FOURTH SOLDIER: Silence, brats! His head sits not so unsteady as the heads of your papas.

SECOND LAD: What mean you, son of a donkey?

FOURTH SOLDIER: O, I bray, do I? Just wait and see! Before the day is over, your stubborn little necks will grovel in the dust before yon image.

THIRD LAD: Grovel yourself! (*He butts his head against* SOLDIER. *The* SOLDIER *stumbles backwards against the* FIRST LAD *who was on all fours behind him. The three lads roll on top of him.*)

FOURTH SOLDIER (*struggling*): Thou limb! Thou son of evil! Thou—

LADS (*laughing*): Bow down, bow down before the golden image!

FOURTH SOLDIER: Help! Help! Help!

(*Enter three* JEWS. *The* FIRST JEW *runs to aid* SOLDIER.)

FIRST JEW: Shame! Let him go! Let him go, I tell you. 'Tis for cause such as this the Babylonians hate us. (*Shakes* LAD.)

FOURTH SOLDIER (*rising*): Beat him, master, beat him black and blue. (*Goes.*)

SECOND LAD: He saith we Jews must bow before the image. We won't bow, will we, father?

SECOND JEW: God of our fathers! Look! Yonder! The golden image!

FIRST JEW: An image of some Babylonian god—what then?

THIRD JEW: They whisper in Babylon that by an image of gold the king will smite our people.

FIRST JEW: The king shall never make us bow to a false god.

THIRD JEW: But what if we refuse?

SECOND JEW: A fine—or prison!

FIRST JEW: What! Put men in prison for their beliefs? Not in this age!

SECOND JEW: Only a fine, maybe. I shall pay it. Catch me bowing down to a god of gold.

FIRST JEW: A pretty example to our children's children!

THIRD JEW: Well, I won't go to prison; I've a family to consider.

THIRD LAD: Go to prison, father. I'll look after the family.

THIRD JEW (*naturally irritated*): Unnatural child!

SECOND JEW: There come more of our people. (*Advances.*) Woe, woe to Israel!

(*Enter at least four other* JEWS.)

FOURTH JEW: What means this? Slaves of Nebuchadnezzar are driving all the Jews in Babylon hitherward!

FIFTH JEW: What sitteth yonder on the plain of Doura?

SIXTH JEW: What means the image of gold?

SECOND JEW: Woe to our people!

SEVENTH JEW: Let us away!

ALL (*rushing toward right*): Away! Away! (SOLDIERS *push them back on stage.*)

FOURTH JEW: The soldiers of the king!

FIRST JEW: This way! (*All surge toward left; the* SOLDIERS *push them back.*)

SECOND JEW: Ai! 'Tis a trap. (*All huddle in center.*)

THIRD JEW: We are caught between the soldiers of the king.

(SHADRACH *and* MESHACH *enter.*)

SHADRACH: Sons of Israel! Be bold and quit you like men.

ALL THE JEWS (*turning to him*): O Shadrach and Meshach, protect your people!

SHADRACH: O my people, if the king hath brought us hither to make known his will, shall we not listen!

ALL THE JEWS (*bowing*): May he live forever!

(MUSIC. *Enter* ILI *and* MELZAR, *followed by* HERALD.)

ILI: Jewish captives of the King of Babylon, hear ye the king's command.

HERALD (*stepping forth, blows a blast*): To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of music, ye fall down

and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the King hath set up; and whoso falleth not down and worshipeth shall that same hour be cast to the burning fiery furnace.

Hear and obey the law, slaves of the King of Babylon!

HALF THE JEWS: Ai! Ai! The burning fiery furnace!

OTHER HALF: The burning fiery furnace! Ai! Ai!

SHADRACH (*raising his arms to heaven*): O thou God of Israel, strengthen thy people! Make them strong to serve thee!

FIRST JEW (*plumping on his knees*): O God of Israel, spare us, spare thy people, and pardon our transgression.

JEWS (*kneeling beside* FIRST JEW): O Lord, pardon!

FIRST JEW: King Nebuchadnezzar may make us bow the knee, but our hearts serve only thee, Lord.

JEWS: Only thee!

(SHADRACH *and* MESHACH *do not join them;* ILI *and* MELZAR *stand together at rear, laughing maliciously. The* JEWS *rise.*)

FIRST JEW: O Shadrach, do you not counsel obedience to the law?

SHADRACH (*sternly*): Thou shalt have none other gods but me.

FOURTH JEW: O man of superior clay, wilt thou not bow to the image made of gold?

ILI: Shadrach worships only a god made in the image of Shadrach.

(JEWS *laugh uneasily.*)

FIRST JEW: O Meshach, *thou* wilt bow with us?

MESHACH: I dare not.

JEWS: *Dare* not?

MESHACH: I fear the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar, but I fear God more.

FIRST JEW: In our hearts we bow to Jehovah. If the king fancy that we bow down to his image, let him.

JEWS: Yea!

THIRD JEW: Bah, let us be honest. If I bow down to the image, it is to save my skin.

JEWS: No, no, no! Our wives and little ones!

FOURTH JEW: There cometh Abed-nego! (ABED-NEGO *enters.*) Hast heard the news, O beloved of Nebuchadnezzar?

ABED-NEGO: Yea, I have heard. But the king is gracious—he would maybe forgive—

ILI (*suavely*): Count not on that. Whoso obeyeth not shall that same hour be cast to the burning fiery furnace.

ABED-NEGO (*shrinks*): Ai! That death?

FIRST JEW: Lord, all know thy heart. If thou dost bow it is to save thy people.

ABED-NEGO (*doubtfully*): Thinkest thou so? I—I think not so. I fear—it is for myself I fear—
I would be honest—I *know* it is for myself I fear.
Shadrach, how say you?

SHADRACH: I serve Jehovah. I shall not fear what man can do to me.

ABED-NEGO: I would I could say so! And thou, Meshach?

MESHACH: My boy, listen to thine own heart.

ABED-NEGO: My heart is—fearful.

SHADRACH (*begins scornfully but ends earnestly*): Feed on the words of Moses, how he said: Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

MESHACH: For he shall give his angels charge over thee—to keep thee.

ABED-NEGO (*shivers*): That all was in the past; men see not angels now.

MESHACH (*gently*): Unless they walk with God.

ABED-NEGO: Ah, God be with me! (*He turns away.*)

(*The Babylonian maidens enter dancing in honor of the god of gold. One maiden enters first with a garland which she hangs before statue; the others follow.*)

DANCE:

Hold arms in front, elbows bent, hands stiffly forward.

Have the dancers enter in two groups, one from each side.

8 counts: Skip in and face the image of gold.

4 counts: Still facing image, the two groups draw together.

4 counts: With fingers touching over head, each dancer revolves.

4 counts: Facing image, the two groups move away from each other.

4 counts: With fingers touching over head, each dancer revolves.

8 counts: Each leader, with group following, passing each other in front of the image, skips to form a semi-circle, facing audience.

MUSIC: Tarentelle—Stephen Heller.

(*As the dance ends the King's* PAGE *enters.*)

PAGE:

Bow down! Bow down!
Nebuchadnezzar the Great,
Conqueror of the world,
Son of the gods,
Approacheth!

ALL: May he live forever! (*They bow to ground.*)

(*The* KING *enters, followed by all the* SOLDIERS. ILI *steps forth.*)

ILI: Hearken, O king, hast thou not made a decree that every man that shall hear the sound of music, flute, and dulcimer, shall bow down and worship the golden image?

KING: The thing is true.

ILI: And whoso obeyeth not the same shall be cast to the burning fiery furnace?

KING: So it is written.

ILI (*triumphantly*): There be certain Jews, O king, lords over Babylon, who regard thee not, nor will worship the image thou hast set up.

KING (*interrupts at words, "nor worship"*): Bring hither these men.

(*All fall back, leaving* SHADRACH *and* MESHACH *at one side,* ABED-NEGO *at the other.*)

KING: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, lords whom I have set over Babylon, will ye not do my pleasure? (*Pause.*)
If ye bow down, your people who are slaves shall be made free men of Babylon; if ye bow not, *they* shall suffer.

JEWS (*cry*): Save us, O princes of the house of Israel!

SHADRACH: Men of Israel, such only shall be freemen, who

for the faith that is in them shall stand ready—to suffer—fire.

Will ye be slaves or freemen, O house of Israel?

MESHACH: Lo, what shall it advantage us to gain the whole world, if we lose our soul?

ABED-NEGO: What matter my soul, if I may save my people?

JEWS (*turning to him*): All hail, saviour of Israel!

MESHACH (*taking a step toward* ABED-NEGO): Lad, it is not given one to save another—save by example. See thou, if thou bow down unto a god of gold, thou leadest thy people far from the green pastures of Israel.

JEWS (*shout*): Out upon him! Silence him! Suppress him!

KING:

Silence! (*They silence.*)
Choose ye, life—or death?

(*All lean forward eagerly to watch* ABED-NEGO. *Suddenly he puts one arm before his face as though to shield him from the king and crosses swiftly to* SHADRACH *and* MESHACH.)

ABED-NEGO: Give me of your strength.

SHADRACH (*placing his arm about him*): Trust ye in the Lord forever—

SHADRACH:
MESHACH:
ABED-NEGO:
} For in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

(*The* KING *makes a sign. The* HERALD *blows.* (*Other music if possible.*) *All bow save the three. As the* BABYLONIANS *rise they fall upon* SHADRACH, MESHACH *and* ABED-NEGO *shouting.*)

BABYLONIANS: Death! Death! They shall bow! Force them!

(*The* Soldiers *force them to earth before image and fetter them.*)

King: Cast them to the burning fiery furnace!

(*Curtain*)

Remove blue back-drop and image of gold.

Act III. *The Burning Fiery Furnace*

(*There is only a faint light in furnace. The* First Soldier *is driving the* Jews *to stoke the furnace. They carry logs of wood and mounting steps in fear, cast in their logs and retire hastily.*)

First Soldier (*cracking whip*): More heat, ye dogs!

Jews (*as they throw on wood*): Ai! The flames! O God of Israel, save! The heat! The heat!

(Ili *enters. The red light grows stronger.*)

Ili: More heat, ye cowards! Am I not lord over Babylon? The king commands ye heat the furnace seven times.

Seventh Jew: 'Tis death to approach!

Ili (*significantly*): 'Tis death to linger.

(Seventh Jew *throws on wood, staggers back and falls headlong.*)

Ili: Remove the dog! (First *and* Second Jews *remove him.*)

(*March. Enter the* Babylonian Maidens *led by* Melzar; *the* Herald *and* Soldiers *follow with* Shadrach, Meshach *and* Abed-nego *in chains. Enter the* King *and* Page.)

Song and Music: "Hail to the Monarch"—Cantata of Esther by Bradbury. For music, see pages 138 and 139.

(*All bow low.*)

KING: Is the furnace heated seven times?

ILI: It is, O king.

KING: Is it of purpose, O Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that ye serve not my god? Once again I speak: If, even now, when ye hear the sound of music ye shall fall down and worship the golden image, well! But if ye worship not—who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hand?

MESHACH: O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter.

SHADRACH: If it be so, our God whom we serve, *is* able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; but if *not,* be it known to you that we will not serve thee—

SHADRACH:
MESHACH:
ABED-NEGO: } Nor worship the golden image that thou hast set up.

BABYLONIANS ALL (*cry*): Cast them to the fire!

(*The* SOLDIERS *push them up steps and hurl them over. As they do so, they stagger back, crying,* "Gods preserve us!") *The fire burns its brightest.*)

(*Sacrificial dance by the* MAIDENS, *led by* ILI *and* MELZAR.)

MUSIC: Cry of the Prophets of Baal, from Mendelssohn's Elijah. For music, see page 65.

DANCE:

Lift knees high and point toes down.

FIRST POSITION: *Hold arms in front, elbows bent, hands stiffly forward.*

SECOND POSITION: *Let fingers meet over head.*

20 counts: March in a circle. (First Position.)

4 counts: Revolve. (Second Position.)

4 counts: March in a circle. (First position.)
4 counts: Revolve. (Second Position.)
4 counts: March to center of circle. (First Position.)
4 counts: Kneel.
4 counts: Bow prostrate to ground.
4 counts: Raise arms to heaven.
4 counts: Bow prostrate to ground.
4 counts: Raise arms to heaven.
4 counts: Rise.
4 counts: Retire to outer rim of circle. (First Position.)

SONG (*Same music*):

Lo, we cry to thee!
Lo, we bow the knee,
O Bel-Merodach!

Let the fire burn
Who thy god-head spurn,
O Bel-Merodach!

MELZAR: The flames abate.

ILI (*mounts steps leading to furnace, crying*): Where now, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, where is the god that shall deliver you? (*He looks into furnace and draws back with a horrified cry.*) Hai!

(*With horrified face he creeps down the steps looking over his shoulder.*)

KING: I command you, speak!

ILI: Hai! (*Still with horrified face, he backs away and slinks out.*)

KING (*mounts steps and looks, turns to people with amaze*): Did we not cast *three* men, *bound*—into the midst of the fire?

BABYLONIANS (*bowing*): True, O king!

KING: I see *four* men—*loose*—and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods!

JEWS (*cry exultantly*):
The Lord, he is the God!
The Lord, he is the God!

KING: O Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, servants of the most high God, come forth!

(SHADRACH, MESHACH *and* ABED-NEGO *appear. The* SOLDIERS *who are keeping the* JEWS *back, stand in amaze.*)

HERALD: Look ye, their chains are *loosed!*

FIRST SOLDIER: Behold! The fire hath had no power over their bodies!

SECOND SOLDIER: Marvel! Neither is a hair of their head singed!

FOURTH SOLDIER: Is there a god among the Babylonians—could do this thing?

KING: Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him, and yielded their bodies that they might not worship any god except their own God. (*He turns and faces forward.*)

Therefore I make a decree that every people, nation or language which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, because there is no other god who is able to deliver.

SHADRACH:
MESHACH:
ABED-NEGO: } Who is God save the Lord?

JEWS (*rushing forward, shout*): The Lord, HE is the God!

ALL SING: *"Old Hundred."* (*They raise arms to heaven.*)

"Be thou O Lord exalted high!
And as thy glory fills the sky,
So let it be on earth displayed,
Till thou art here as there obeyed."

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

THE PEOPLE

Prologue.
Mary.
Joseph.
The Baby. (By all means a real baby.)
Shepherds. (At least four.)
Shepherdess.
Children of Bethlehem. (At least four, and as many as possible.)
Three Kings.
Epilogue.

THE PLACE

The stable at Bethlehem. This play has been given in chancel of church, on stage at settlement house, on platforms. If scenery is possible, have a dull tan background, possibly of burlap, with a suggestion of night sky beyond.

At one side of stage have a manger partly filled with hay or straw. (A manger may be made from a packing-box. Nail slats to box at an angle of forty-five degrees; connect these by slats. Have a box or stool on one side for Mary. Arrange box so that the lantern may rest in some sort of a socket at rear.) Spread straw over stage.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COSTUMES

Mary should be in white, with veil over head and under chin, and a blue mantle. Joseph should be in yellow, the shep-

herds in black and white and tan. If real sheepskins cannot be obtained, cream or tan eiderdown can be cut to resemble skins for the shepherds' costumes. The children's slips should be straight pieces of goods, seamed, with a slit for neck. Let the kings wear scarlet and purple. The baby should be in madonna blue, fastened about waist and feet with two-inch bands of white.

THE PROPERTIES

An oaten pipe.
A pair of mittens.
A shepherd's cap.
A lamb.
A bob o' cherries.
A ball.
A bird of clay. (Let the child make it herself.)
A casket of gold.
An incense burner, with burning incense.
A box of myrrh.
An old lantern. (Take a round tin box and tin shears. Cut holes, one or two inches in diameter, all over box. Fasten it by chains to the end of a stick. Fasten a candle inside, or an electric bulb.)
Saddlebags.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

PROLOGUE

Fair sirs,
Bright be your eyes that ye may see more clear
Than we can show in story, Jesus' birth!
Come ye in spirit gentle; ye shall hear
The wonder of his love, who, here on earth,
Blessed little children.
In a child-like way
Come ye and share with us our Christmas play.

For if in you, this blessed Christmastide,
More faith, more hope, more charity abide,
Ye, gentles, of the real Christ-birth partake.
And this we ask for Jesus Christ, his sake!

THE NATIVITY

(*Let* "Holy Night" be sung softly just before the curtains are *drawn.* MARY *is reclining beside manger;* JOSEPH *holds the child out to her.*)

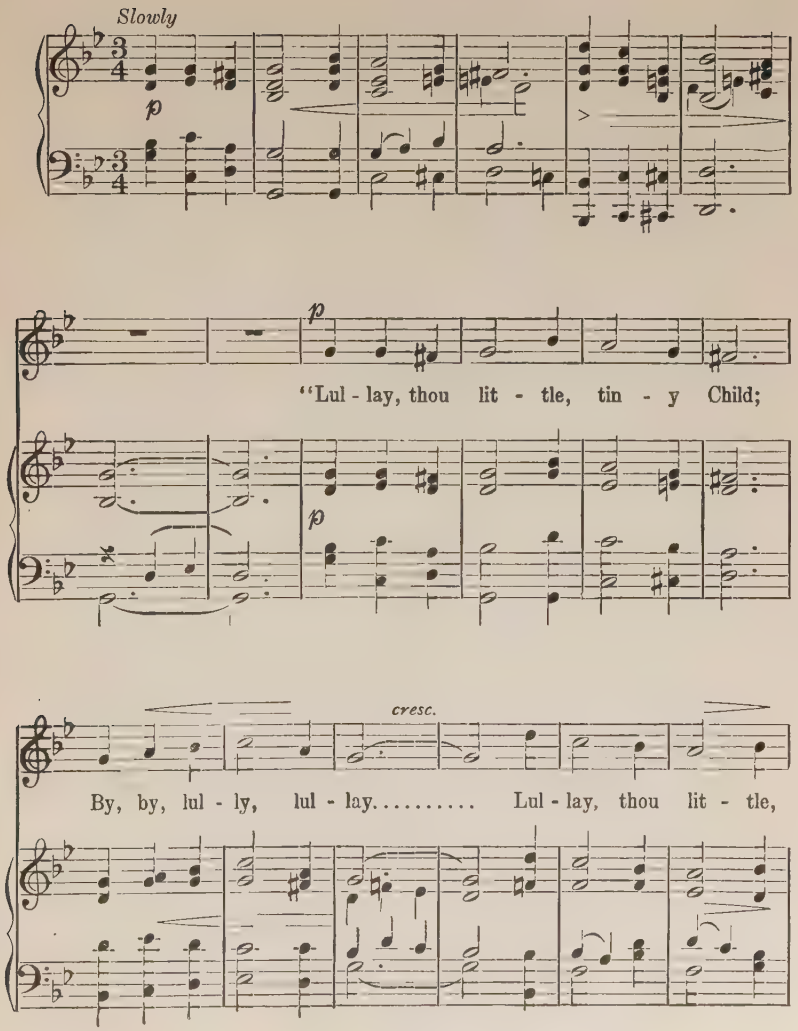
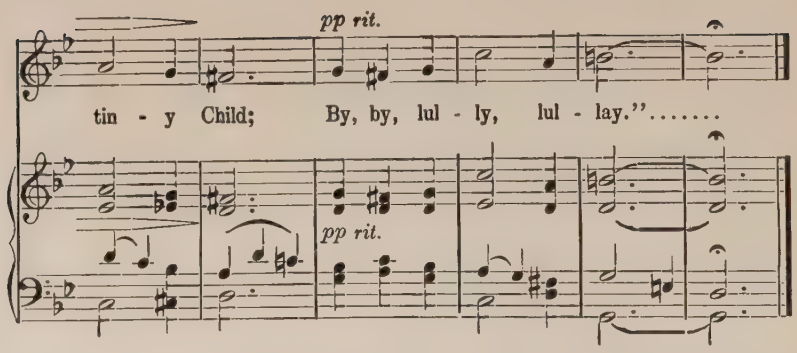
JOSEPH:

Unto you a child is born; unto you a son is given!
And the government shall be upon his shoulders—

MARY: And his name shall be called "Wonderful!" (*She reaches for child.*)

(*There is a knocking at door;* JOSEPH *takes lantern and goes.*)

MARY (*sings*): Coventry Carol.

Lullaby, "Coventry Carol"



(The Shepherds' Song from Pastoral Symphony by Beethoven may be played softly during speech of Joseph and Mary, dying away as song of "Glory to God in the Highest" begins.)

(JOSEPH *returns and speaks with awe.*)

JOSEPH:

Mary, shepherds are come from the frosty hills
To hail the babe as Saviour and as King of Israel.
For unto them, watching their flocks in darkness,
A great light hath shined,
Cherub voices have sung,
Guiding them hither.

MARY:

O little son, little son,
May thou indeed be for a light to all
Who sit in darkness!
Bid the shepherds enter.

(JOSEPH *admits the* SHEPHERDS, *who press forward.*)

FIRST SHEPHERD: Lo, comrades, behold the babe!

THE SHEPHERDS

SECOND SHEPHERD: And wrapped in swaddling clothes!

THIRD SHEPHERD: And lying in a manger!

OLD SHEPHERD: Hark! The same chorus ringing!

(*From the back of the church or room comes the faint chorus of* "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill to men." *It is repeated triumphantly. All listen reverently and with awe.*)

MARY: Sirs, ye seek this little child?

FIRST SHEPHERD: Even so! For we were upon the hillside, keeping watch over our flocks this night—

SECOND SHEPHERD: When lo, the angel of the Lord came upon us and the glory of the Lord shone round about us—

FIRST SHEPHERD: And we were sore afraid.

THIRD SHEPHERD: And the angel said unto us, Fear not! For behold I bring you good tidings of great joy—

ALL THE SHEPHERDS (*nodding*): *Great joy!*

THIRD SHEPHERD: Which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

ALL THE SHEPHERDS (*raising arms aloft*): All hail!

FOURTH SHEPHERD: Yea, and he said, This is a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

FIRST SHEPHERD:

"Hail, mother and wife so mild!
As the angel said, so have we found.
I have nothing to present to the child
But my oaten pipe; take it in thy hand.

Wherein much pleasure have I found.
And now to honor thy glorious birth,
This shalt thou have to make thee mirth."*

SECOND SHEPHERD:

"Now hail be thou child and thy dame,
For in a poor lodging here art thou laid.
So the angel said and told us thy name.
Hold, take thou here my hat on thy head.
And now of one thing thou art well sped:
For weather thou hast no need to complain,
For wind nor sun, hail, snow nor rain."*

THIRD SHEPHERD:

"Hail! Be thou lord over water and lands!
For thy coming we all make mirth.
Have here my mittens to put on thy hands;
Other treasure have I none to present thee with."*

MARY (*stretching out her arms*):

O shepherds,
Dear are your gifts; your love doth crown him king.
The soft hay is his throne; he shall not lack.

ALL THE SHEPHERDS (*on their knees*):

O thou child of David,
Be thou *our* shepherd!
Then shall we lack nothing.
Make us to lie down in green pastures;
Lead us beside the still waters—

VOICE OF SHEPHERDESS (*without*):

Ho, shepherds, ope the door!

*From old English Miracle Play.

FIRST SHEPHERD: 'Tis Madelon! (*He opens door.*)

(*Enter* MADELON, *carrying lamb. She stands in amaze.*)

SHEPHERDESS

Have ye then found the child?
Is it come to pass?

OLD SHEPHERD (*pointing*):

There lies the blessed one, sleeping so sweet
Between the ox and ass.

SHEPHERDESS (*kneels*):

O little child,
God's gracious gift to us, his wandering sheep,
I bring to thee a little lamb, new-weaned—
'Tis but a gift from shepherds poor—
For it is writ,
That like a shepherd thou wilt feed thy flock,
And in thine arms the little lambs wilt gather,
And gently lead—

MARY (*smiling*):

The little lambs will follow,
Where the sheep go astray.

SHEPHERDESS (*eagerly*):

O didst thou know?
The little children wait without the door,
The little Bethlehem children, wistful-eyed
To see the baby.
While the older doubt,
The children hasten.

JOSEPH (*hastily*):

Let them wait the morn,
Lest they awake the child and weary thee.

MARY:

Nay, suffer them to enter, for of such
Shall be his kingdom. He shall ever be
A friend to little children, have a friend
In every child-like heart.

(*The* SHEPHERDESS *admits the* CHILDREN*; they enter shyly.*)

FIRST CHILD (*pointing to manger*): Look! Look! 'Tis he!

SECOND CHILD: There in the straw!

THIRD CHILD (*the smallest*): Lift me that I may see. (*The* SHEPHERDESS *lifts her.*)

FIRST CHILD (*shyly*):

Sweet Mary, we have brought to the little baby
Our toys, whatever each one had,
For him to play with.

SECOND CHILD: We thought perhaps he'd like them.

THIRD CHILD (*offers clay bird*): Here is a little bird I've made of clay.

FIRST CHILD (*offers ball*): And here my ball!

SECOND CHILD (*offers cherries*): And here a bob o' cherries!

FOURTH CHILD: And couldn't we see the baby?

MARY:

Soft! Draw nigh! The little one lies sleeping,
The baby ye come seeking.

A CHILD: Lo, we have waked him.

ALL THE CHILDREN: Sing we lullaby!

(*The* CHILDREN *draw near and sing* "Coventry Carol.")

THE LITTLE CHILDREN SING A LULLABY

A CHILD:

O Mary, the mother of Jesus,
Why doth he make his bed
In a rude wooden manger,
Where cattle lately fed?

ANOTHER CHILD:

O Mary the mother of Jesus,
Why stand the oxen round?
And why stand the shepherds gazing?
And why make the sheep no sound?

ANOTHER CHILD:

O mother of the baby,
O take me in thy arms;
Lay me where Jesus rested,
And I'll be safe from harms. (*She cuddles in* MARY'S *arms.*)

ANOTHER CHILD:

O Mary, the mother of Jesus,
I had nothing to bring.
I wept when I saw the others,
When lo, there, blossoming
Beneath the snow, these winter roses smiled.
Lo, I have woven a garland for the child. (*Presents wreath of Christmas roses.*)

JOSEPH (*starting forward as though from sleep*):

Let not the thorns come nigh him—Ah!
'Twas but a dream I dreamed,
That the cruel thorns were pressed into his brow.

MARY: These roses bear no thorns.

JOSEPH:

My dream bodes evil.
Evil threatens the child. Hark! Do ye hear?
Far voices! And the tired feet of camels
Plodding hitherward! A great company!
I seek the meaning. Rest ye—(*He goes; all are vaguely disturbed.*)

OLD SHEPHERD (*advancing*):

Fear not, ye!
For God hath given his angels charge o'er thee,
To keep thee in thy way—

VOICE OF JOSEPH (*without*):

Ho, there without!
Ye men with camels, say, whom do ye seek?

VOICES OF THREE KINGS (*From back*):

We seek him that is born King of the Jews,
For we have seen his star in the east,
And are come to worship him.

OLD SHEPHERD:

O little child,
Thy star, so brightly rising, is not doomed
To die in stilly darkness, but shall rise
A light to light the Gentiles, and the glory
Of this thy people, Israel.

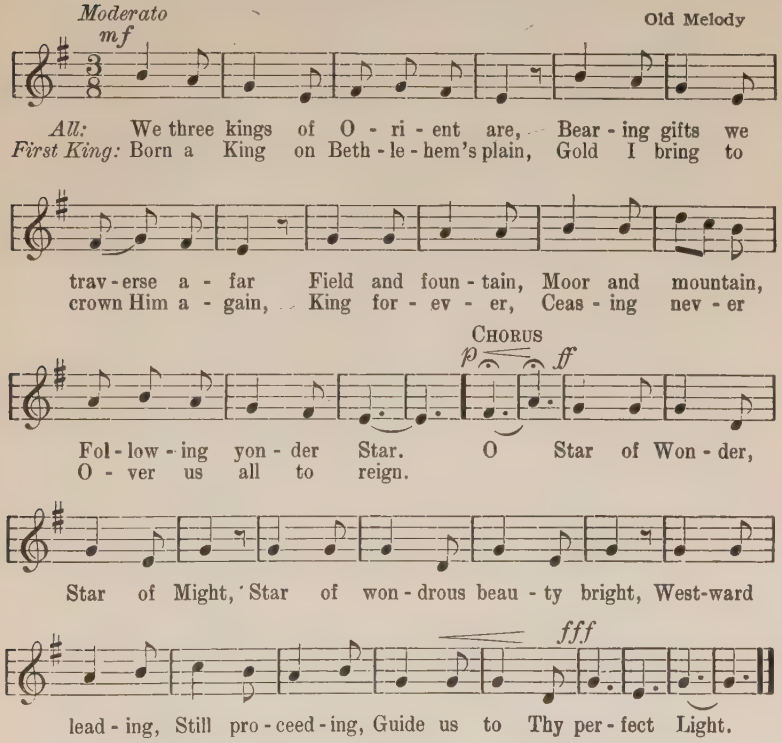
SHEPHERDESS:

And Gentiles from afar come to thy light,
And kings unto the brightness of thy rising.

(*The three* KINGS *enter from back and sing as they march down aisle. If desired they may have pages to carry gifts or trains.*)

MUSIC: *"We Three Kings of Orient Are."* (*Words are slightly altered.*)

"We Three Kings of Orient Are"


Moderato
mf
Old Melody
All: We three kings of O - ri - ent are, Bear - ing gifts we
First King: Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain, Gold I bring to
trav - erse a - far Field and foun - tain, Moor and mountain,
crown Him a - gain, King for - ev - er, Ceas - ing nev - er
CHORUS
p ff
Fol - low - ing yon - der Star. O Star of Won - der,
O - ver us all to reign.
Star of Might, Star of won - drous beau - ty bright, West-ward
fff
lead - ing, Still pro - ceed - ing, Guide us to Thy per - fect Light.

CHORUS: (*All sing.*)

SECOND KING:

Born to set thy people free! Born to make the blind man see!
Sheep astray shall see thy way and all men shall follow thee.

CHORUS: (*All sing.*)

THIRD KING:

Myrrh the costly gift I bring, Child of God the heavenly king.
Through the night bright lit by star light, come we a-journeying.

CHORUS: (*All sing.*)

(*They reach the manger.*)

FIRST KING:

Strangers, for many a weary night
We have followed a star of wondrous light
Which shines near the Southern Cross; but now
The star hath trembled and hath rested still
Above this cattle shed in Bethlehem.
Is this the star your prophets prophesied
Would to both Jew and Gentile *joy* betide?
The star of the Messiah?

SECOND KING:

Ah, we have sought so far!
And we have hoped so long,
To see the Blessed One!
Tell us our prayer is answered.

MARY (*lifts the baby*):

Ah, little son, the answer is in thee.
Comfort ye, comfort ye now;
Your search is at an end. (*The kings kneel.*)
Nay, sirs, arise, arise I pray of you!
'Tis but a babe ye see—

THE CHILD IN THE MANGER

THIRD KING:

O woman,
We Magi of the East have dreamed dreams and seen visions;
We have studied the words of your wise men,
And as clear water to a thirsty soul,
Are these words of your prophets:
There shall come forth a rod out of Jesse's stem,
And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and might,
The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,
As the waters cover the sea.

FIRST KING (*kneeling, presents casket*): Gold as for tribute I bring.

SECOND KING (*presents incense*): Incense, my offering!

THIRD KING (*presents myrrh*):

And myrrh is the gift I bring to thee,
O child of the heavenly king.

MARY:

O sirs, ye bring your faith, your hope, your love;
To you, what can I say?
Already are God's choicest blessings yours;
For you what can I pray?
But let *your* love and faith encompass *him,*
On his life's way.

Will your faith comfort him,
In hour of sadness, make him stronger?
Will your love cherish him,
When these arms hold him safe no longer?
Children, shall it be so?

CHILDREN (*eagerly*): Aye, that we'll promise!

SHEPHERDESS: Aye, that we'll pray for.

OLD SHEPHERD:
Mary of Nazareth, it is useless, useless!
The child must stand alone.

MARY (*anxiously*):
There is a note of warning in your voice,
A tone of sadness, shepherd?

OLD SHEPHERD:
Shall he be a Saviour,
And with a Saviour's love, then must he war
'Gainst all men's vanities; comes he as king,
Then must he war with Herod.
And either way my love fears—

FIRST KING:
Nay, old shepherd,
Ye do him wrong, ye do King Herod wrong.
It was of Herod that we asked our way,
Saying, Where is he born King of the Jews,
For we have seen his star in the east,
And are come to worship him.

SECOND KING:
And he sent us unto Bethlehem and said:
Go and search diligently for the child;
When ye have found him bring me word again
That I may worship also.

THIRD KING:
See you, shepherd,
You do King Herod wrong.

(JOSEPH *enters hastily.*)

JOSEPH:
Mary, arise!
Take up the child and follow.

MARY (*rising*): Whither?

JOSEPH (*preparing saddlebags*):
Where the Lord shall lead!
For I have dreamed a dream,
And thorns beset his pathway.

FIRST KING: Lo, King Herod, he will protect—

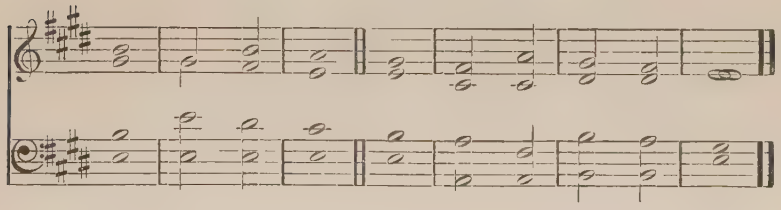
JOSEPH:
Trust thou not in the king;
Put not thy faith in princes. Herod seeks
The young child to destroy him. This my dream!
Visions of kings and shepherds pass from sight,
As out into the starlit wintry night,
We pass in rude awakening to Egypt in our flight.
Ye wise men three, let the same bright star-ray
Which led you, guide you home another way.
Back to your folds ye shepherds,
Ere the day breaks and shadows flee away!

First King: Such is the truth of kings!

(*The* Kings *and* Shepherds *kneel and chant the* Nunc Dimittis.)

Nunc dimittis

St. Luke 11. 29



1. Lord, now lettest thy servant de | part in peace:
   ac | cording to thy word.
2. For mine | eyes have seen:
   thy | – salvation.
3. Which thou hast pre | pared:
   before the face of | all people;
4. To be a light to lighten the | Gentiles:
   and to be the glory of thy | people Israel.

Mary (*wrapping the child*): Lo, I am ready.

A Little Child (*wistfully*): And will ye come again to Bethlehem?

Mary:

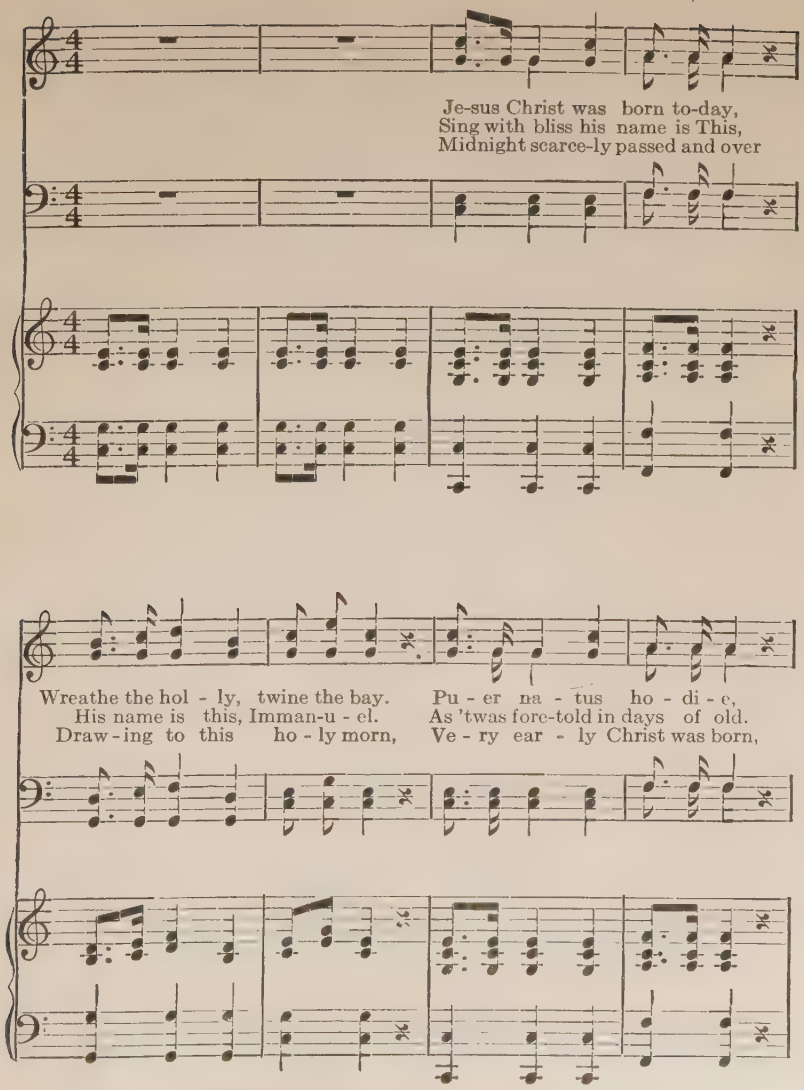
Dear little Bethlehem children, it shall be
Even as God our Father leadeth me.
Children of Bethlehem, within your hearts,
I'd have you cherish this fair memory:
Once I the King of Israel did see,
A little babe upon his mother's knee.

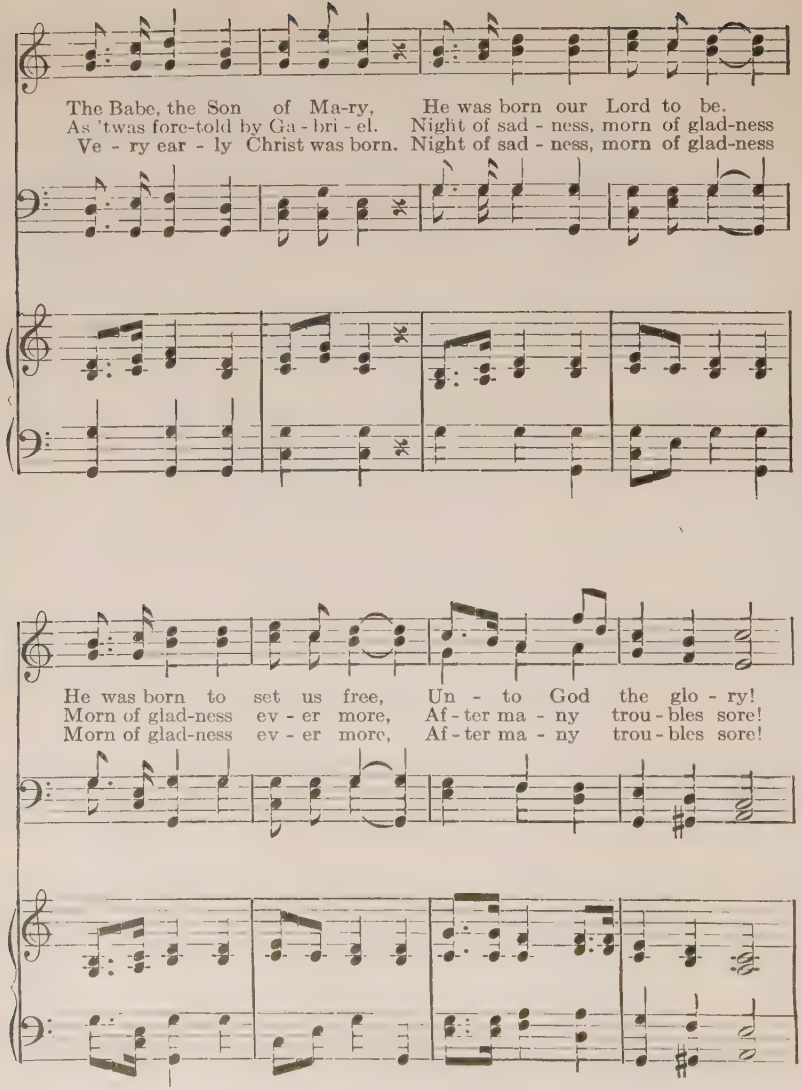
Take back your gifts; search ye in Bethlehem;
Into the byways and the hedges go;
There shall ye find poor little ones enow;
Them make ye merry.
And when the glad day of his birth returns again,
As ye would give to him, so give to them,
And make all children glad with love and mirth;
So shall this day be blessed to the earth.
So shall God's gift to us teach love of giving;
So shall his love for us teach love for others;
So never shall your memory grow dim.
This is the cup he bids you take;
'Tis filled with love unto the brim:
This is the bread he bids you break
In memory of him.
Love is the way of Christ your Lord;
Walk ye therein!

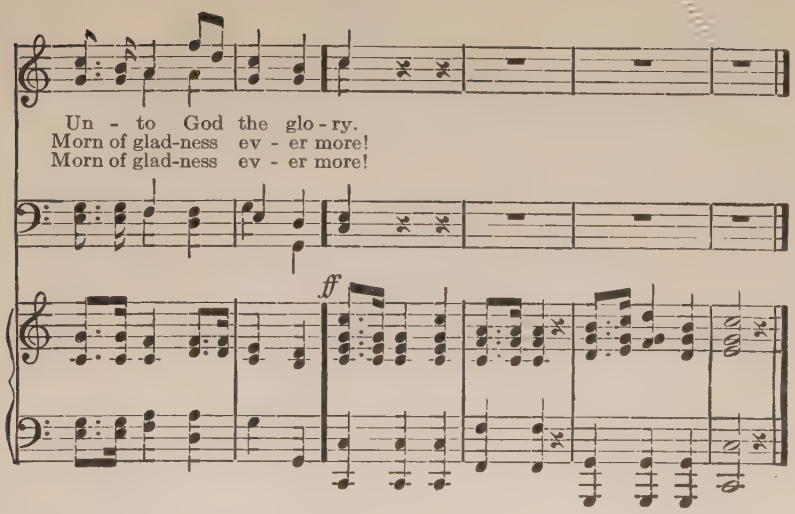
(MARY *and* JOSEPH *go with the child.* JOSEPH *carries saddle bags, in which he has put the gifts of* SHEPHERDS *and* KINGS, *and the lantern. The stage grows dark. The others march down through audience singing.*)

SONG: "Jesus Christ Was Born To-day." (*Old Swedish song, adapted.*)

MUSIC: "Gaudeamus Igitur."


Je-sus Christ was born to-day,
Sing with bliss his name is This,
Midnight scarce-ly passed and over
Wreathe the hol - ly, twine the bay.
His name is this, Imman-u - el.
Draw - ing to this ho - ly morn,
Pu - er na - tus ho - di - e,
As 'twas fore-told in days of old.
Ve - ry ear - ly Christ was born,


The Babe, the Son of Ma-ry, He was born our Lord to be.
As 'twas fore-told by Ga - bri - el. Night of sad - ness, morn of glad-ness
Ve - ry ear - ly Christ was born. Night of sad - ness, morn of glad-ness
He was born to set us free, Un - to God the glo - ry!
Morn of glad-ness ev - er more, Af - ter ma - ny trou - bles sore!
Morn of glad-ness ev - er more, Af - ter ma - ny trou - bles sore!



(*The* EPILOGUE *advances and speaks.*)

O all ye people gathered here to-day,
In love and charity receive this play.
In your imaginings ye've lived the day
Of the first Christmas. O all ye people pray
That love dwell in your hearts on Christmas day, alway.

Now hath your fancy shadowed forth the star
Which led the Wise Men, and the light from far
The shepherds followed.
And may that love and faith your hearts enfold,
Which led the little ones to Jesus
In the days of old;
Which lead the little children now
To Jesus' fold.

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